A very excellēt & swete exposition vpon the xxxij. Psalme of Dauid called in Latine:

Dominus regit me, &c.

¶ Translated oute of hye Almayne into Englyshe by Myles Couerdale.

Anno M D XXXVIII.

The .xxii. psalme of Dauid called in Latine

Dominus regit me, et nihil

i The LORDE is my shepeherde, I shall lacke nothynge.
ii He fedeth me in a grene pasture, and leadeth me to the fresh water.
iii He quyckeneth my soule, and bringeth me forth in the waye of ryghteousnesse, for hys names sake.
iiii Though I walke in the valley of the shadowe of death, yet feare I no euell, for thou arte wyth me: Thy staffe and thy shepehooke do comforte me
v Thou prepareste a table before me agaynste myne enemyes, thou anoyntest my head wyth oyle, and fyllest my cuppe full.
vi Oh let thy louynge kyndnesse and mercye followe me all the dayes of my lyfe, that I maye dwell in the house of the LORD for euer.



¶ An exposition vpon the .xxii. Psalme.

IN this Psalme doth Dauid and euery christen hart geue thankes & prayse vnto God for his most principal benefit, namely, for the preachyng of his dear & holy word, wherby we are called, accepted, and nõbred amonge the multitude, which is the cõgregacion or church of God: where onely (and in no place els) the pure doctrine, the true knowlege of Gods wyll, and the ryght seruice of God is founde and had. The effect of this Psalme

But this same noble treasure doth holy Dauid prayse and extol maruaylous excellently with goodly, swete, fayre, & pure wordes, yee & that with lykenesses, borowed out of the Gods seruice of the olde Testament.

Fyrst, he lykeneth hymselfe to a shepe, whom God hymselfe (as a faythfull diligent shepherde) doth wonderous well take hede vnto, fedeth hym in a pleasaunt grene pasture, whiche stõdeth full of good thicke grasse, where ther is abundaunce also of fresh water, & no scarcenesse. Item he lykeneth God also vnto suche a shepherde, as with his staf leadeth & bryngeth the shepe the playne right way, that it cã not go amysse, and defẽdeth A shepe

The shepherde

hys flocke so wyth the shepehooke, that the woolfe can not breake in. After thys doth he make hymselfe a geste, for whom God prepareth a table, where he fyndeth both strength and comforte, refreshynge and ioye, and that plenteously.

A geste

And thus the Prophete geueth ỳ worde of God diuerse names, calleth it goodly pleasaunt grene grasse, freshe water, the ryght waye, a staffe, a shephooke, a table, balme or pleasaunt oyle, and a cuppe that is alwaye full. And thys he doth not without a cause: for the power of Gods worde is manyfolde For why? Lyke as a shepe in a fayre pleasaũt medowe, beside the grene grasse and freshe water in the preſẽce of hys shepherde (which leadeth it wyth the staffe or rodde, so that it can not go astraye: and defendeth it so with the shepehoke that no harme can happẽ vnto it) hath hys foode & pleasure in al safegarde. Or lyke as a mã lacketh nothynge ỳ sytteth at a table, where ther is plenty of meate and drynke, and al maner of cõforte & gladnesse: So muche more, they that be ỳ shepe of thys shepherd (wherof thys psalme syngeth) lacke no good thynge, are rychely prouyded for, not only in soule but also in body. As Christ sayeth in the sixte of Mathew: Seke fyrst ỳ kyngdome of God, and the ryghteousnesse

The word of God hath many names.

ther of

therof, so shal all these thynges be mynistred vnto you. For as they ỳ wante bodely foode lyue in greate straytnesse and pensyfnesse, not beynge able to fulfyl the bodyes request in thys behalfe: euen so also those ỳ wante thys wholsome and necessarye word of god, can not reioyce nor be pacyfyed inwardly. Yee euen as bread and wyne refresh a mans fleshy harte, and make hym ioyfull: euen so the worde of God quyckeneth & refresheth a mans soule inwardly.

The preachynge of gods wod bryngeth prosperite

For whan the worde of God is truly & syncerely preached, loke how many dyuerse names the prophete geueth it here, so many commodyties and frutes doth it brynge. Unto them that are diligent and earnest to heare it (whom oure LORDE God knoweth onely for hys owne shepe) it is a pleasaũt grene grasse, a freshe water, where with they are satisfyed and refreshed. It kepeth them also in the ryghte waye, and preserueth thẽ, that no myssortune nor harme happen vnto them. Moreouer, it is vnto thẽ a cõtinuall wealth, where ther is abũdaunce of meate & drynke, and all maner of ioye and pleasure. That is, they are not onely instructe and gyded, refreshed, strengthed and comforted by the worde of God, but euer more & more preserued in the ryght waye, defended in all

maner of trouble both of body and soule. And fynally they haue ỹ victory & preuayle agaynste all temptacyons and troubles, wherof they muste abyde ryghte many, as the fourth verse doth specifye. Shortly, they lyue in all maner of safegarde, as they, vnto whome no myssortune can happen, for as much as theyr shepherde doth fede them and preserue them.

The doctryne to be taken of this psalm

Therfore shulde we take instruccion out of thys Psalme, not to despyse ỹ worde of God, but gladlye to heare, and learne the same, to loue it, and to make muche of it, & to resorte vnto ỹ lytle flock, where we maye haue it. And agayne on ỹ other syde, to flye and eschue those that do blaspheme and persecute it. For where thys blessed lyght doth not shyne, there is nother prosperite nor healthy, nother strength, nor comforte, eyther in body or soule, but vtter dysquietnesse, terroure and dispayre, specially whan trouble, dystresse, and paynfull death is at hande.

Clause.57. How be it the vngodly (as ỹ prophete sayeth) haue neuer rest, whether they be in welth or wo. For yf they be in prosperite, thã are they presumptuous, proude, and hyghe mynded, forget oure LORDE god vtterly, boaste, & crake onely of theyr owne power, ryches, wysdome. &c. And take thought beside, how they

they maye maynteyn and increace the same, and how they may persecute and oppresse other men that lye in they? wayes. But yf the leafe turne aboute with the, as doutlesse it must nedes do at the last: (for that swete virgin Marye is a very sure prophetisse, which yet hath not fayled in hyr songe) the are they of all the mooste miserable & careful lest people, which immediatly fall to despayre and mistruste. What ayleth them? They knowe not where nor how they shall seke comforte, seynge they haue not ỹ worde of God, which onely teacheth ỹ ryght waye how to be patient, and to haue a good hope, euen in aduersite. Roma. xv. Thys thynge ought to warn vs & mouevs, that we esteme nothynge moze excellent noz worthye vpon earth, than thys benefyte, namely to haue ỹ deare blessed worde, and that we can be in a place, where it may be freelye preached, and professed openlye. A Christen mā therfore ỹ belongeth vnto a church, wherein the worde of god is taught, as oft as he goeth in, shuld thynke vpon thys Psalme, & out of a ioyfull harte wyth the prophete to geue God thākes for hys vnoutspeakable grace, that he hath set hym (as hys owne shepe) in a pleasaunt grene medowe, where ther is plentye of good grasse and fresh water. That is, that

Depoſuit potētes de ſede, & diuitꝫ dimiſit inanes.

An enſample for vs.

he maye be in a place where he maye heare & learne the worde of God, & conceaue ryche comforte therout, both in bodye, and soule.

Thys blessed Dauid dyd well vnderstonde, how worthy a treasure it is, whan it maye so be had, therfore can he boast & singe so well of it, & magnifye thys benefite aboue all that is in onye estymacion or worshippe vpõ earth. At hym ought we to learne thys science, and (accordynge to hys ensample) not onely to be thankfull vnto God oure louynge and faythfull shepherde, & to magnifye his vnoutspeakeable gyft, which he of very louynge kyndnesse hath geuen vs (as Dauid doth here in the fyrste fyue verses,) but also earnestly to desyre and pray hym (as he doth in the laste verses.) that we maye abyde by thys ryches, and neuer to fal away from hys holy Christen churche.

What we ought to learne here of Dauid.

And such a prayer is exceadynge necessarye: ffor we are very weake, and (as the Apostle saynt Paule sayeth) we carye thys treasure aboute in earthen vessels. The deuell also our aduersary beareth deadly hate vnto vs for thys treasures sake. Therfore doth he not rest, but goeth aboute as a roarynge Lyon, & seketh how he maye deuoure vs. Besyde all thys he hath a quarel vnto vs, because of our olde sacke which we carye

2. Cor. 4.

yet vpon

yet vpõ oure neckes, wherin ther be yet also dyuerse concupiscences and synnes. Moreouer, the deare flocke of Christe is spotted & fyled with so many horrible offences (or slaũders) that because of the same ther do many fall awaye frõ thẽ. Therfore (I saye) it is necessary that we praye, and put thys vncorrupt doctryne styll in practise, & defẽd oure selues therwith agaynst all slaũders, that we maye cõtinue vnto ỹ ẽde & be saued.

Thys madde and blynde worlde knoweth vtterly nothynge of thys treasure and precious stone, but ymagyneth onely (euen as a swyne or vnreasonable beast) how they maye here fyll the belly: Or els (whan it cõmeth to the poynt) they followlyes & ypocrisye: As for the truthe and fayth, they let it passe. Therfore do they synge no Psalme vnto God for hys holy worde, but rather (whan he offreth it vnto them) they blaspheme it, and condemne it for heresye. And as for those that teache it, or wyl be knowen of it, the worlde persecuteth them, and putteth thẽ to death, lyke as yf they were deceauers, and the most vngracyous wretches ỹ are in the worlde. It shalbe good therfore for thys small flocke to knowlege suche a benefyte, & wyth the prophete to synge a Psalme or songe of thankesgeuyng vnto God for it.

The blindnesse of ỹ worlde.

Of them ꝑ wolde, and can not haue the worde of God.

But what saye ye of them that can not haue ꝑ preachynge of Gods worde? As namely, they that dwell here and there amonge tyrauntes and enemyes of the truthe? No doute, whereas the worde of God is preached, there can it not passe awaye wythout frute, as Esay sayeth in the.lv. Chap. The good christen people also of the same place haue one vauntage, which in dede is deare vnto them. ffor they that be Christen men, coũte it a very great thynge, that they may be in a place where ꝑ worde of God is frely and openly taught and knowleged, and the sacramentes mynistred after Christes institucion. But as for these, they be sowē very thynne. The false christen are alwaye mo then the good. The great multitude careth nothynge for Gods worde, nother do they knowlege it for a benefyte, that they may hear it without al harme & parel. Yee they are soone fylled and weery of it, and esteme it but a payne to heare it, and to receaue the holy sacrament.

Agayne, they ꝑ suffre vnder tyrauntes, complayne daye and nyght, and long greatly for it. And yf a smal morsel of oure bread that Christe hath geuen vs so rychely doth come vnto them, they receaue it wyth great toye and thankfulnesse, and do them selues

muche

muche good withall, where as oure ſwyne in the meane ſeaſō hauynge ỹ worthy bread them ſelues ſo rychely, and many whole baſkettes full therof, cā not reache vnto it, they are ſo weery of it. Yee they caſt it downe, walowe them ſelues therin, treade it vnder theyr fete, and runne ouer it.

Menware weery of ỹ worde of God.

Therfore goeth it euē after ỹ prouerbe. Whā a thynge beginneth to be comune, it is nomore ſet by, but deſpyſed, be it neuer ſo precious. And ſuche Prouerbes are ſpecially founde true in ỹ worde of God. Where men haue it, there wyl they not away withall. Agayne, where men haue it not, there wolde they be glad to haue it. Where men haue a church at theyr dores wherin ỹ word of God is taught, there go they vp & downe in the market in the preachynge tyme, and lurcke about the graues. Where they be ten or twentye myle from it, there wold they be glad to go with the multitude, and to paſſe ouer with them vnto the house of God with toyfulneſſe, and thankeſgeuynge, as it is in the .xli. Pſalme.

Of them ỹ dwel vnder tyrauntes.

Therfore ſhortelye thys is myne anſwere vnto the queſtion, cōcernyng thē that dwel vnder tyraūtes: Bleſſed be they which are now ſcattered abrode vnder the Turke or Pope, beynge deſtitute of Gods worde, & wolde

worde yet be glad wyth all theyr hartes to haue it, & in the meane season receaue wyth thankesgeuynge suche morsels as they can get, tyll the meale be better. Nowe yf they be not farre from the place where the worde of God is preached, and the blessed sacrament mynystred accordyng vnto Christes institucion, they maye well go thyther, & enioye the same treasure, lyke as many do, and are therfore punyshed of theyr wycked rulers, both in body, and goodes. But yf they dwel farre frō suche places, yet do they not ceasse at ỹ leest to sighe therafter. No doute Christ oure LORDE wyll heare theyr sighynge, & in processe of tyme wyl he turne back theyr captyuyte. Agayne, vnhappye, yee and vnhappie agayna are they, that haue this treasure plenteouslye at theyr dores, and yet care not for it. On them shall the word of Christ be fulfylled where he sayeth. Many shall come from the easte, and west, & shall syt wyth Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kyngdome of heauen, but the chyldrē of the kyngdome shalbe cast out.

Mathei. 8

&c. Let thys be sayde for an introduccion. Nowe wyll we shortly go ouer the Psalme.

¶ The LORDE is my shepherde, I shall lacke nothynge.

FYrst of all the prophet and euery faythfull hart, calleth God hys shepherde. Nowe though ỹ scripture geueth God many louynge names, Yet thys whiche the Prophete geueth here vnto God, is a much more swete and gracyous name, where he calleth hym a shepherde, and sayeth: The LORD is my shepherde. It is very comfortable whan the scripture calleth God our hope, oure strength, oure stonye rocke, our castell, our shelde, our cõforte, our deliuerer, our kynge. &c. ffor verely he declareth the thynge so styll in dede vnto his owne, that he is euen so as ỹ scripture describeth hym. But exceedynge cõfortable is it that he is called here (and many tymes els in the scripture) a shepeherde. ffor in this only word Shepeherde, is almost all comprehẽded together, what good and comfortable thynge so euer is spoken of God.

A swete name.

Therfore doth the prophete speake thys worde wyth a toyfull and sorowlesse hart, whych is full of fayth, and for very great gladnesse & cõforte, exceadeth. And sayeth not: The LORDE is my strẽgth, castel. &c.

The castle ỹ moued ỹ prophet to cal God his shepherde.

Whiche

Whiche were a maruaylous comfortable sayenge: But the LORDE is my shepherde As yf he wolde say: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde, and I his shepe, then am I wonderous well prouided for, both in body & soule, he shall get me a competent lyuynge, he shall defende me & kepe me fro myssortune, he shal care for me, he shall helpe me out of all trouble, he shall comfort me, he shall strengthe me. &c. Summa, he shall do for me what so euer a good shepherde ought to do. All these benefites and mo doth he cõprehẽde in this onely worde Shepherde, as he expoundeth it hymselfe immediatly, where he sayeth: I shall lacke nothynge. Besydes this some of the other names which ỳ scripture ascribe vnto God, sounde partly to glorious and to hye, & bryngе in a maner a feare with them, whã men heare thẽ to be named. As whã ỳ scripture calleth God our LORDE, Kynge, Maker. &c. Of such a nature is not this worde Shepherde, but soundeth very frendly, and vnto thẽ ỳ be godly, it bryngeth in a maner a confidence, cõforte and trust with it whã they reade or hear it, lyke as this worde father, and other mo, whã they be appropriated vnto God.

A very cõforteal lesson.

Therfore is this one of ỳ most louyng and cõfortable similitudes (& yet very cõmẽ) in the

in the ſcripture, that it lykeneth ỳ maieſty of god, to a vertuous, faythful, or (as Chriſt ſayeth) a good ſhepherde: and vs poore, weake, and wretched ſynners to a ſhepe.

Now can not thys cõfortable & louynge ſimilitude be better vnderſtande, thã to go into the creatures themſelues (wherout the prophetes toke thys & ſuch other lyke ſimilitudes,) and to learne diligently thereby, what the condiciõ and property of a naturall ſhepe is, and the office, labour and diligence of a good ſhepherde. Who ſo taketh good hede therunto, maye not onely wyth eaſe vnderſtande this and other ſimilitudes in the ſcripture concernynge the ſhepherde and the ſhepe: but alſo they ſhalbe vnto hym exceadynge ſwete and comfortable.

The condicion of a Shepe.

A ſhepe muſt lyue only by the helpe, defence and diligẽce of hys ſhepherde: as ſoone as it leſeth hym, it is compaſſed about with all maner of parell, and muſt nedes perysh: for it can not helpe it ſelfe. For why, it is a poore, weake and innocent beaſt, that can nother fede nor gyde it ſelfe, nor fynde the ryght waye, nor kepe it ſelfe agaynſt ony vnhappyneſſe or miſfortune. Sauynge this that of nature it is fearfull, flyeth & goeth aſtraye. And yf it go but a lytle out of the waye, and come from hys ſhepherde, it is

not

not possible for it selfe to fynde hym agayne, but runneth euer farther and farther from him And though it come to other shepherdes and shepe, yet is it nothynge helped therwith. ffor it knoweth not ꝑ voyce of straũge shepherdes, therfore flyeth it from them, and runneth so longe astraye, tyll the wolfe rauysh it, or tyll it perysh some other wayes.

The propertie of a shepe.

Neuertheleſſe as weake a beaſte as it is, yet hath it thys condicion, that wyth all diligẽce it bydeth with his owne shepherde, and seketh comforte at hys helpe and defẽce: And how or whether so euer he leadeth it, it followeth. And yf it can but be with hym, it careth for nomore, nother feareth it ony mã, but is careleſſe and mery, for it lacketh nothynge. It hath also thys good vertue in it, whiche is well to be marked: (for Chriſt doth specially prayſe the same in hys shepe) thys vertue, I saye, it hath, that it wyll be earneſt and sure to heare and knowe the voyce of hys shepherde, and ordreth it selfe therafter, and wyl for nothynge go from it, but followeth straycht the same. Agayne, it regardeth no straunge shepherdes voyce. And though they call and whiſtle vppon it neuer so frendly, yet careth not it therfore: much leſſe doth it followe them.

The office

Agayne, this is ꝑ office of a good shepherde,

herde, that he doth not only prouyde for his ſhepe paſture, and other mo thynges that belonge therto, but defendeth them alſo that no harme chaunce vnto them. Beſydes this he taketh diligent hede that he leſe none. Yf ony go aſtraye, he runneth after it, ſeketh it, and fetcheth it agayne. As for ſuch as be yonge, feble, and ſicke, he dealeth gently wt them, kepeth them, holdeth them vp, and caryeth thē, tyll they be olde, ſtrōge & whole. &c

of a ſhepherde.

Euen thus goeth it alſo in ỳ ſpirituall ſhepfolde, that is to ſaye, in the flocke of Chriſt. Lokehow lytle a naturall ſhepe can kepe, gyde, rule, ſaue or defēde it ſelfe againſt daunger and myſfortune (for it is a feble and wapenleſſe beaſt:) So lytle cā we poore, weak, and miſerable people kepe & rule our ſelues ſpiritually, walke and endure in the ryght waye, or of our owne ſtrēgth to defēde vs agaynſt all euel, and to get vs helpe and comforte in trouble and diſtreſſe.

How it goeth in ỳ ſhepfolde of Chriſt.

ffor how ſhulde he haue ſkyll to gyde hym ſelfe after a godly faſhion, ỳ knoweth nothynge of God, that is conceaued and borne in ſynne (as we all are), and of nature the chylde of wrath, and the enemye of God? How ſhuld we fynd the ryght waye and cōtinue therin, ſeynge that (as ỳ prophet Eſay ſayeth) we can do nothynge but go aſtray.

The miſery of oure nature.

Howe is it possible that we shulde defende our selues from the dyuell (which is a prince and lorde of this worlde, whose presoners also we be euery one,) seynge that with all oure power and myghte, we can not do so muche as to hynder a smale leafe to hurte vs, or a poore flee from greuynge vs? Why wyll we poore wretched people boaste so muche of great comforte, helpe, and counsell agaynst ỹ iudgemẽt of God, agaynst Gods wrath, and euerlastynge death, seyng that by our selues and other, we haue experience dayly and hourely, how we can nother counsell, nor comforte our selues in smal bodely necessityes?

A playne cõparison.

Therfore conclude thus hardely: As lytle as a natural shepe can helpe it selfe in the thynges that be leest of all, but muste loke for all benefites at his shepherdes hãde: much lesse can a man rule, comforte, helpe or geue counsell vnto hymselfe in thynges belongynge to saluacion, but muste loke for all such at ỹ only hand of God his shepherd, wich to fulfyl ony thyng for hys shepe that is to be done, is a thousande tymes more wyllynge and diligent, then ony other vertuous shepherde in the worlde.

Christe is our shepherde.

As for thys shepherde of whom ỹ prophete had spoken so longe before, it is euen

Christ

Chriſt oure louynge maſter, whych is farre an other maner of ſhepherde then Moyſes, whych is harde and extreme vnto hys ſhepe, & dryueth them backe in to the wylderneſſe, where they fynde nother paſture, nor water, but playne ſcarceneſſe, Exod. iii. But Chryſte is the gracyous and louynge ſhepherde, whych rūneth after the famyſhed and loſt ſhepe in the wylderneſſe, and ſeketh it there: And whā he findeth it, he taketh it vp gladly vpon his ſhulders. Luc. xv. Yee & geueth his lyfe alſo for his ſhepe. Jo. x. This muſt nedes be a louynge ſhepeherde. Who wolde not be glad then to be a ſhepe of his?

This ſhepherdes voyce wherwith he ſpeaketh and calleth vnto his ſhepe, is the holy goſpell, wherby we be taught that we optayne grace, remiſſiō of ſynnes and euerlaſtyng ſaluacion, not by Moſes law (wher thorow he putteth vs in ỹ more feare, drede and diſpayre, whiche were to fearful, to ſore afrayed and diſpayred to muche afore,) but by Chryſt, whiche is the ſhepherde and byſſhoppe of our ſoules. i. Pet. ii. whiche hath ſought vs myſerable and loſt ſhepe, and fetched vs out of the wylderues, that is to ſay, from the lawe, from ſynne, frō death, from the power of the deuell, from euerlaſtynge damnacion: And in that he gaue hys lyfe The ſhepherdes voyce.

for vs, optayned he vs grace, remission of synnes, cõforte, helpe and strength agaynst the deuell and all myssfortune, yee and euerlastynge lyfe also. This is now vnto the shepe of Chryste, a louynge swete voyce, which they are hartely glad to heare, which they knowe ryghte well, and ordre them selues therafter. As for a straunge voyce that soundeth otherwyse, they nother knowe it, nor herken vnto it, but auoyde & flye awaye from it. &c. Joh. x.

The pasture. The pasture wherwith Chryste fedeth his shepe, is also the comfortable gospell, wherby the soules are fed and strengthed, kepte from errour, comforted in all temptacions and troubles, defẽded agaynste the craft and power of the deuell, and fynally delyuered out of all trouble. Neuertheles̃e for as muche as his shepe are not all alyke stronge, but some yet lost, and scattred here and there abrode, wouñded, sycke, yonge and feble, he doth not therofre cast them awaye but hathe much more respecte vnto them, & careth more dilygẽtly for them, then for the other, that haue not suche nede. ffor as the prophete Ezechiel sayeth in ỹ. xxxiiii. Chap. He seketh them that be lost, bryngeth together them that be scattred abrode, byndeth vp suche as be wounded, loketh to them that

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be sycke. And the weake lambes that be but yonge at the fyrste (sayeth Esaye) he taketh vp into his armes, and beareth them, and suche as be with yonge ones, doth he dryue forth fayre and softly. All this doth our louynge mayster Christ by the office of preachynge and distributynge of the holy sacrament, as it is ofte and with many wordes taught in other places. ffor to set it forth here worde by word as nede shulde requyre, it were to lõge. The prophete also hym selfe wyll declare it afterwarde in the Psalme.

We haue ben deceaued.

By this then maye we easely perceaue, how shamefully we haue ben seduced vnder the papacy. ffor Christ was not so louyngly set forthe vnto vs, as the dearly beloued prophetes, Apostles, and Christe hym selfe doth: but so fearfully was he described vnto vs, that we haue ben more afrayed of hym, then of Moyses, yee we thought Moyses doctryne muche more lyghter, and to haue much more swetnesse in it, then the doctrine of Christ. And so we knewe nothynge els, but that Christ had ben a wrothfull iudge, whose displeasure we myght haue reconcyled with our good workes and with our holines, & whose pardõ we myght haue optayned through the merytes and intercessions of sayntes. This is not onely a shamefull

iesynge, and a miserable deceauyng of poore consciences, but also the hyghest blasphemy of the grace of god, a denyenge of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Chryste. &c. and of all his vnoutspeakeable benefytes, slaunderynge and condemnynge of his holy gospell, a destroyenge of faythe, and (in steade therof) a settynge vp of vtter abhomynacions, lyes, and errours, &c.

Blyndnesse.

Yf this be not darkenesse, then can not I tell what darkenesse is. Yet coulde no mã in a maner perceaue it, but euery mã toke it for ỹ playne verite, & yet vnto this day wyl our pappystes nedes take it for ỹ ryght way, and shed much innocent bloude for ỹ same. Go to then, yf we can kepe and gide our selues, yf we can preserue our selues from errour, yf we can optayne grace and remissiõ of synnes, resyst the deuell & all misfortune, ouercome synne and death by our owne merytes: Then must all the scripture be false, which testifyeth of vs, how that of our selues we are but lost, scattred abrode, wolded, weake, and feble shepe. And so shulde we haue no nede of Chryste to be shepherde, to seke vs, to brynge vs together, to gyde vs, to bynde vs vp, to loke vnto vs, & to strẽgthy vs agaynste the deuell. And so hath he also geuen his lyfe for vs in vayne: For yf we cã

brynge

bryngе al this to passe, & optayne it through our owne strēgth and goodnesse, then haue we no nede of Chrystes helpe.

But here thou hearest the contrary: namely, that thou art but a lost shepe, & of thy selfe canst not come to the shepherd agayn, but to go astraye onely that canst thou well do. And yf Chryst thy shepherd dyd not seke and fetch the agayne, thou must nedes be a praye vnto the wolfe. But nowe he cōmeth, seketh, fyndeth, and bryngeth the vnto his folde, that is to saye, into his Chrysten congregacion, through the worde & sacrament, geueth his lyfe for the, and holdeth the styll by the ryght hande, lest thou shuldest fall into ony errour. There hearest thou nothyng of thyne owne strēgth, of thyne owne good workes and merytes, except thou wylt call it strength, a good worke and meryte to go astray, to be feble and lost. Chryst worketh, deserueth, and sheweth here his power onely. It is he that seketh, beareth and gydeth the. He through his death deserueth lyfe for the. He onely is stronge, and defendeth the lest thou shuldest perysshe and be taken awaye out of his hādes. Joh. x. Vnto all this canst thou do nothynge, saue applye thyne eares to heare, and with thankesgeuynge to receaue suche an vnoutspeakeable treasure,

Marke thys well.

and to learne to knowe well the voyce of thy shepherde, to followe hym, and to eschue the voyce of straungers.

Take hede to thy shep herdes voyce.

Wherfore yf thou wylt be rychely prouyded for, both in body and soule, aboue all thynges take good hede than to the voyce of this shepherde, herken well what he sayeth vnto the, let hym fede the, rule the, gyde the, defende the, comforte the. &c. That is to saye, kepe the vnto his worde, be glad to heare it and to learne it, & so no doute thou shalt be well prouyded for, both in body and soule.

By thys that hath ben spoken of hether to, I thynke it but easy to vnderstand these wordes: The LORDE is my shepherde. Yee and all the whole Psalme besyde. They are but few wordes: The LORDE is my shepherde, but of a great weyght and pyth. The worlde maketh great boastynge and crakynge of honoure, power, ryches, fauour, of men &c. But the prophete maketh his boast of none of these: for they be all vncertayne and transytory. He speaketh but few wordes and good: The LORDE is my shepherde. Thus speaketh a sure and constant fayth, which turneth hyr back vpon euery thynge that is temporall & transitory, howe hye and precyous so euer it be, and turneth ỹ face and hart strayght vnto

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the LORDE, whiche is onely and altogether and doth it hym selfe alone. Euen he, & els none whether he be Kynge or Emperour (sayeth he) is my shepherde. Therfore goeth he forwarde in all quyetnesse and sayeth.
I shall lacke nothynge.

This doth he speake in generall of all the benefytes bodely and goostly, that we receaue by the offyce of preachynge. As though he wolde saye: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde, then doutles I shall lacke nothynge. I shall haue abundaslce of meate drynke, clothynge, alyuynge, defence, peace, and all maner of necessaryes what so euer serueth for the sustentacion of this lyfe.
A generall sentence.
ffor I haue a ryche shepherde, whiche shall not suffre me to lacke. Neuertheles he doth speake mooste specyally of the spiritual goodes and gyftes that the worde of God bringeth with it, and sayeth: ffor as much as ỳ LORDE hath taken me amonge his flock, & prouydeth for me with his owne pasture. that is: for as much as he hath rychely geuen me his holy worde, he shall not suffre me to haue scarcenesse in ony thynge. He shal geue his blessynge vnto the worde, that it maye haue strength, & brynge forth frute in me. He shall lykewyse geue me his spirete to stande by me, & to comforte me in al tem-

cacions and troubles, to make my harte also sure and certayne, and that I doute not therin, but that I am one of my shepherdes deare shepe. And he my faythfull shepherde, which wyll deale gently with me, as with a pooze weake shepe, and wyll strength my faythe, endue me also with other spirituall gyftes, comfozte me in all troubles, heare me whan I call vpon hym, defende me from the wolfe, that is from the deuell, so that he shall not be able to do me harme. And fynally delyuer me from all mysfortune. This meaneth he whan he sayeth: I shall lacke nothynge.

An obiectiō Thou wylt saye: Yee but wherby shall I perceaue that the LORDE is my shepherde? I can not perceaue that he dealeth so louyngly with me, as the Psalme speaketh, yee the contrary do I well perceaue. Dauid was an holy prophete, and a man dearly beloued vnto God, therfoze coulde he easely talke of the matter, and beleue well as he sayd. As foz me, I shall not be able to do it after hym, foz I am a pooze synner.

An answer I haue declared aboue, that a shepe hath this good cōditiō & proper vertue in it, that it knoweth well the voyce of his shepherde, and ozdzeth it selfe rather after the eares, then after the eyes. The same vertue doth

doth Christe prayse also in his shepe, whan he sayeth Joh. x. My shepe know my voyce. Now his voyce soundeth after this maner: I am a good shepherde, and geue my lyfe for my shepe. And I geue them euerlastyng lyfe, and they shall neuer perysshe, & no man shall plucke them out of my hande. Take good hede nowe vnto this voyce, and ordre thy selfe therafter. Yf thou so do, then be sure that thou art one of Christes shepe, & he thy shepeherde, which knoweth the ryght well, and can cal the by name. Now yf thou hast hym for thy shepeherde, then shalt thou verely lacke nothyng, yee thou hast already that thou shuldest haue, euen euerlastynge lyfe. Item thou shalt neuer perysshe, nother shall ther be ony power so greate & myghtye, as to be able to pluck ỹ out of his hand. Onely be thou sure of this. For doutles this shepherdes voyce shall neuer fayle the. What wylt thou more?

Leaue not the voyce of thy shepherde.

But yf thou letteste this voyce go, and ordrest thy selfe after the syght of the eyes, and after the felynge of that olde Adam, the leseste thou the fayth and confidence, whiche thou as a shepe shuldest haue vnto hym as to thy shepeherde. And so falleth ther vpon the now one ymaginacion, now another, so that thou canst not be in quyete, but disputest

reſt by thy ſelfe and ſayeſt: Yf the LORDE be my ſhepherde, why ſuffreth he then the worlde to plage me and perſecute me ſo myſerably, contrarye to all my deſeruynge? I ſyt amonge wolues, and am not ſure of my lyfe the twinkelynge of an eye, but I ſe no ſhepherde that wyll defende me. Item, why geueth he the deuell licēce to do me ſo much harme, with feare and deſpayre? Beſydes this, I fynde my ſelfe all vnapte, feble, vnpacient, and laden yet with many ſynnes: I fynde no certaynte, but doutfulneſſe, no conſolacion, but fearfulneſſe and quakynge for the wrath of God. Whan begynneth he to declare in me, that he is my ſhepherde?

Whatgood followeth whan one cleueth faſt to gods worde.

Suche and many other mo wonderful cogitacions ſhalt thou haue, yf thou let his voyce and worde paſſe. But yf thou cleue ſtyll faſt vnto it, then ſuffreſt thou nother the deceatfulneſſe of the deuell, the diſpleaſure & madneſſe of the worlde, nother thyn owne infyrmite and vnworthyneſſe to ouercome the by temptacion: but goeſt on boldly, and ſayeſt: Whether the deuell, ỹ worlde, or myne owne conſcience do take parte agaynſte me neuer ſo fearſly, yet wyll not I therfore take ouermuch thought. It muſte and ſhalbe thus, that who ſo euer is a ſhepe of the LORDE, he can not remayne vntempted

tempted. Let it go with me as it maye, yee whether they seeth me, or rost me, yet is this my comforte, that my shepherde hath geuen his lyfe for me. Besydes this, he hath also a swete and louynge voyce, wherwith he comforteth and sayeth: I shall neuer peryssh nother shall ther ony mā plucke me out of his hande, but I shall haue euerlastynge lyfe. This promyse wyl he faythfully kepe with me, what so euer become vpon me. And thoughe somtyme ther chaunce a synne or other impediment by the reason of myne infyrmite, yet wyll he not therfore cast me awaye, for he is a louynge shepherde, whiche loketh to the weake shepe, byndeth vp theyr woundes, and healeth them. And to the intent that I shulde be the surer of this, & not to doute theron, he hathe lefte me here the holy Sacrament for a token that it is so in dede.

Euen thus hath the prophete done. He was not mery alwaye, nother coulde he at al houres singe: The lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothyng. He hath ben sōtyme at many a great exigēt, yee al to many: so ỳ he nother felt ỳ ryghteousnesse, cōforte, nor helpe of god, but playne synne, the wrath of God, fearfulnesse, dispayre, the paynes of hell &c. as he complayneth hymselfe in ma-

ny Psalmes. Neuertheleſſe he turneth hym from his owne felynge, and taketh holde of God by his promiſe concernynge Meſſias that then was for to come, and caſteth this in his mynde: Howe ſo euer it ſtande with me, yet is thys the cõforte of my hart, that I haue a gracyous & mercyfull LORDE, whiche is my ſhepeherde, whoſe worde and promyſe doth ſtrength and cõforte me, therfore ſhall I lacke nothynge. And euen therfore hathe he wrytten thys and other Pſalmes, to the intent that we ſhulde be ſure, that in very temptacyons there is elſwhere no counſel nor comforte to be found. And that this is the onely golden ſcience, namely, to cleue vnto the worde and promyſe of God, and to iudge after the ſame, and not after the felynge of the harte. And ſo (no doute) ther ſhall followe helpe & comforte, and not fayle in ony thynge.

¶ Now followeth the ſeconde verſe.

He fedeth me in a grene paſture, and leadeth me to the freſh vvater.

In the fyrſte verſe hathe the Prophete ſhortly comprehended the meanynge of the whol pſalme, namely that who ſo euer hath the LORDE for his ſhepherd, ſhall lacke nothynge. More than this doth not he teache

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in thys Psalme, but onely setteth forth the same more at larg with goodly ornate wordes and similytudes how it chaunceth that they which are ỹ lordes shepe, lack nothyng, and sayeth: He fedeth me. &c. But almoost thorow out the whole Psalme (as his maner is oft tymes to do) he vseth wordes, whiche signifye somwhat els than they sounde. As whan he maketh mencion of the shepherde, of the fedyng, of ỹ grene pasture, of the fresh water, the staf, the shepehooke &c. it is easy to perceaue that he wyll haue somwhat els vnderstonde therby, then we men vse to speake therof. Suche maner of speakynge is very cõmune in the scripture, and therfore shulde men take diligent hede thervnto, that they maye be accostumed wythall, and learne to vnderstonde it.

But se howe well fauouredlye he can speake. I am (sayeth he) a shepe of the lordes, whiche fedeth me in a grene pasture. &c. A naturall shepe can not be better, thẽ whã the shepherde fedeth it in a pleasaunt grene pasture, and besyde fresshe water. Yf it can haue thys, it thynketh no man vpon earth is more ryche or happyer then it. For there it fyndeth euery thynge that it can desyre. A goodly thyck plentyfull grasse, wherof it waxeth stronge and fat: A fresshe water,

where

wher wyth it can refresshe, and quycken it
selfe. There hath it pleasure and toye: Euen
so wyl Dauid saye here lyke wyse, that God
neuer shewed hym a greater grace and be-
nefyte vpon earth, then thys, that he myght
be in the place and among the people, where
the worde and dwellynge of God, and the
ryght Gods seruyce was. For where that
treasure is, there goeth it well both in the
spirytuall and wordlye regiment. As yf he
wolde saye: All the nacions and kyngdo-
mes vpon earth are nothynge. They are
(in dede) rycher, myghtyer, and more glo-
rious then we Jewes, and make great boa-
stynge therof. They boast also of theyr wys
dome and holynesse, for they haue goddes
also whome they serue: yet wyth all theyr
pompe and glory, they are but euen a playn
wylderneesse and desert. For there is nother
shepherde nor pasture, therfore muste the
shepe nedes straye, be famyshed & perysh: As
for vs, though we haue many wylderne-
ses aboute vs, yet syt we here at rest, safe,
and mery in paradyse, and in a pleasaunt
grene pasture, where there is plentye of
grasse and fresshe water, and haue wyth vs
oure shepherde, whiche fedeth vs, leadeth vs
to the drynke, defendeth vs &c. Therfore can
we lacke nothynge.

Thys

Thys man had gooſtly eyes, and therfore ſawe he ryghtwell, what is the beſt and nobleſt good vpon earth. He maketh no boaſt of his kynglye worſhyppe and power, he knowlegeth wel that ſuch goodes are alſo the gyftes of God: nother runneth he frō thē & letteth thē lye: but vſeth them vnto the honoure of god, and geueth hym thankes therfore. But of this maketh he ſpecialye hys boaſt, namelye, that the LORDE is hys ſhepherde, and he in hys paſture and fedynge: That is, that he hath Gods worde. This benefyte can he neuer forgette, but ſpeaketh therof maruaylous excellentlye, and with greate ioye, and prayſeth it farre abōue all the goodes vpon earth. And thys he doth in many Pſalmes, as in the .cxviii. where he ſayeth. The lawe of thy mouth is dearer vnto me then thouſandes of golde & ſyluer. Item I loue thy commanndementes abōue golde and precious ſtone. O howe ſwete are thy wordes vnto my throte? Yee more then hony vnto my mouthe.

The cheſt good vpō earth is to haue gods word

Thys ſcience ſhulde we learne alſo, namelye, to let the worlde boaſt of theyr great ryches, honoure, power, &c. For it is towſe, vncertayne and tranſytory ware, whiche God caſteth into the doūgeon. It is a ſmall matter for hym to geue an vngracious per-

What we ought here to learne.

sone (that blasphemeth and dyshonoureth hym agayne for hys reward) a kyngdome, a dukedome, or ony other worshyppe, and good vpon earth. These worldlye goodes are hys draff and swillynges, wherwyth he fylleth the hogges bellyes, that he is disposed to kyll. But vnto hys chyldren (as Dauid speaketh here therof) he geueth the ryght treasure. Therfore shulde we as the deare chyldren and heyres of God, nother boaste oure selues of oure wysdome, strength nor ryches: but of thys, that we haue the precious pearle: euen ỳ worthy worde, where by we knowe God oure louynge father and Jesus Christ whome he hath sent. Thys is oure treasure & inheritaunce, whiche is sure and euerlastynge, and better then al ỳ good of the worlde. Who so hath thys, let hym suffre other men to gather mony together, to lyue voluptuously, to be proude, and hye mynded. But though he hymselfe be despysed and poore in the sighte of the worlde, yet let not that tempte hym, but let hym thanke God for hys vnoutspeakeable gyfte, & pray that he maye abyde thereby. It maketh no matter how rych & glorious we be here vpõ earth. Yf we kepe thys treasure, we haue plentye of ryches & honoure. Saynt Paule was a man of lytle reputacion, and poore

The word of God is oure treasure.

vpon

vpō earth, hauynge the deuell & the worlde very fearce agaynst hym: But in the syghte of God he was a man ryght deare & greatly set by. Besydes this he was so poore, that he was fayne to get his liuyng wyth the labour of hys handes. And yet for all ỳ greate pouertye, he was rycher then the emperour of Rome: hauynge neuertheleſſe none other ryches, but the knowlege of Christe. For the which (sayeth he Phil. 3.) I counte all thynges (nothynge vpon earthe excepte,) very losse and dounge.

The God of mercye graunt vs grace, ỳ we also after ỳ ensample of Dauid, Paul & other holy men, maye cōnte oure treasure (which is eu̅ the same ỳ they had) as greate & magnifie it aboue al ỳ goodes vpō earth. and hartelye to geue God thankes therfore that he hath weteſafed it vpon vs, afore many thousandes of other. he myght haue suffred vs to go astraye as well as ỳ Turkes, Egyptcians, Jewes, and other ydolatrers, which know not of that treasure. Or els he myghte haue suffred vs styll to be harde harted, as are the Papystes, that blaspheme and condemne thys treasure of oures. Where as he hath set vs now in hys owne grene medowe, and prouyded vs so rychely with good pasture and fresshe wa-

God hath done more for vs, thē for many other.

ter. It commeth euen of hys grace, therfore haue we the more to thanke hym for.

The medowe.

As for the people of God or the holye congregacion of Christ, the prophet calleth it a grene medowe. ffor it is Gods pleasaunt garden, garnysshed and bewtyfyed w all maner of spirituall gyftes. The pasture or grasse therin, is the worde of God, whereby the consciences are strengthed and refresshed. In the same grene medowe doth oure LORDE God gather hys shepe together, fedeth them therin with good grasse, and refresshyth them with fresshe water. That is, he committeth vnto the holy Christen church the shepherdes office, deliuereth and geueth her the holy gospel, and the Sacramentes, to take charge and loke to hys shepe therewith, that they maye be rychely prouyded for, wyth doctrine, with comfort, wyth strength, and with defence agaynst all euell, &c. As for those that preach the lawe of Moses or the commaundementes of me they fede not the shepe in a grene pasture, but in the wylderneſſe (where they famysh) and leade them to foule stynkynge waters, wherof they perysh and dye.

The grasse

what they be that fede shepe in the wylderneſſe.

By this allegorye of the grene pasture, wyll the the prophete declare the great abundaunce and ryches of the holy gospell and

of

of the knowlege of Chryſt amõge the fayth full. ffor lyke as the graſſe in a grene medowe ſtandeth goodly thycke and full, and euer groweth moze and moze: Eue ſo haue the faythfull not onely Gods wozde wyth all plẽteouſneſſe, but alſo the moze they vſe it, and medle withall, the moze it increaſeth and groweth amonge them. Therfoze ſetteth he the wozdes maruaylous playnly. The great ryches of ſuche as beleue.

He ſayeth not: he bryngeth me once oz ofte into a grene paſture, but fedeth me ſtyl ther in, that I maye lye, take my reſt, and dwell euen in the myddes of the graſſe, and nede neuer to ſuffre hunger oz ony ſcarceneſſe beſyde. ffoz the wozde that he here vſeth, maye be called lyenge oz reſtynge, as a beaſt lyeth and reſteth vpon his foure fete. After the ſame maner doth Salomon ſpeake alſo in the. lxxi. Pſalme, where he prophecyeth of the kyngdome of Chryſte and the goſpell, ỹ it ſhulde myghtely go thozowe and come in to all places, and ſayeth: Ther ſhall be an heape of cozne in the earth hye vpon ỹ hylles. &c. & ſhalbe grene in the cityе lyke graſſe vpon the earth. That Dauid alſo in thys Pſalme ſpeaketh lykewyſe of the goſpell, he declareth hymſelfe afterwarde, wher he ſayeth: He quyckeneth my ſoule. Itẽ Thy ſtaffe & thy ſhepehooke do cõforte me.

The fyrst frute of Gods wozde.

This is now the fyrst frute of ỳ wozde of God, that the chzistẽ are so instructe therby, that they increace in faith & hope, learne to cõmytte all theyr doynges vnto God, & what so euer they haue nede of, eyther in soule oz body, to loke foz it at his hande, &c.

The secõd frute of Gods wozde.

And leadeth me to the fresshe water.

This is the second frute of gods wozde It is vnto the faythfull not onely pasture and grasse, wherby they are fylled & strengthed in faythe. But it is also vnto them a goodly colde fresshe water, where by they take refresshynge and comfozte. Therfoze leaueth he not there where he sayde: He fedeth me in a grene pasture, but addeth this also vnto it: And leadeth me to the fresh water. As yf he wolde saye: In the greate heate whan the Sõne doth soze burne. Psal. c. xx. and I can haue no shadowe, then leadeth he me to the freshe water, geueth me dzynke, and refresshyeth me, that is: in all maner of troubles, anguishes, and necessities, goostly and bodely, whan I knowe not els where to fynde helpe oz comfozte, I holde me vnto the wozde of grace. There onely and no where els do I fynde the ryght cõsolacion & refresshynge, & that plenteously. Now wher as he speaketh here of this comfozte w̃ garnysshed wozdes, he talketh of it in another

place

place with playne and manyfest wordes, & sayeth: Yf thy worde were not my comfort and delyte, I shulde perysshe in my trouble. I wyll neuer forget thy worde, for in my trouble it is my consolacion, yer thy worde quyckeneth me. Psal. 118.

Why the scripture rehearseth so oft this similitude.

Neuertheles he continueth styll in the similitude of the shepherde and of the shepe. And (no doute) it is cõmun in al the prophetes. ffor of the shepe and other cattell had ỳ Jewes theyr best lyuynge, and were cõmunly shepeherdes, as was Dauid and the Patriarkes. Therfore is this similitude oftymes spoken of in the scripture. But Dauid speaketh of this matter after the nature of the contry. ffor the lande of promyse is an whote, drye, sandye, & stony lãde, which hath many wyldernesses & lytle water. Therfore in the fyrst boke of Moses it was more thẽ once declared, how that ỳ heythen shepherdes stroue wt the shepeherdes of the Patriarkes because of water. ffor ỳ whiche cause in the same contry they toke it for a speciall treasur, yf they myght haue water for theyr cattell (In our contryes we knowe not ther of, for ther is water ynoughe euery where.) Of this dyd Dauid se, and he rehearseth it for a speciall benefyte, to be vnder the custodye of the LORDE, whyche shulde

not onely fede hym in a grene pasture, but also in the heate, bryngynge hym to ỳ fresh water, &c.

Shortly, his meanynge is to declare, ỳ as lytle as a mā can come to the knowlege of God and the truthe & to the ryght fayth without the worde of God: So lytle can ther ony comforte and peace of conscience be founde without the same. The worldly haue also theyr comforte and ioye, howe be it ỳ endureth but the twinkelynge of an eye. Whan trouble and anguysh commeth (and specyally the last houre) it goeth awaye. As Salomon sayeth: After laughter, commeth sorowe: and after ioye, commeth heuynesse. But as for them that drynke of this fresshe and lyuynge water, they maye well suffre trouble & disease in the worlde, but they shal neuer lacke the true consolacion. And specyally whan it commeth to the poynt, the leafe turneth ouer with them, whiche is as much to saye, as: After shorte weppynge cōmeth euerlastynge laughter: and after a lytle sorow, commeth excellent ioye. ii. Cor. iiii. ffor they shall not wepe & mourne both here and there, but as Christe sayeth: Blessed are you that wepe here: for ye shall laugh. Luce. vi.

Without gods word cā no mās conscience be at rest.

Pro. 14.

He quyckeneth my soule and bryn-

geth

geth me forthe in the vvaye of rygh-
teousnesse for his names sake.

Here doth the prophet declare hymselfe of what maner of pasture and fresh water he spake: namely, euen of the same ỹ strengtheth and quyckeneth the soule. This can be nothynge els but Gods worde. But for as muche as our LORDE God hath two maner of wordes, the lawe, and the gospell, the prophete whan he sayeth: He quyckeneth my soule geueth sufficiently to vnderstonde that he speaketh not here of the lawe, but of the gospell. The lawe can not quycken the soule, for it is a worde that requyreth and commaundeth vs to loue God wyth all our hartes, &c. and our neyghbour as our selues. Who so doth not this, hym it condempneth, and speaketh this sentence ouer hym: Cursed be euery man which doth not all that is written in the boke of ỹ law. Deut. 27. Galat. 3. Now is it certayne that no man vpon earth doth this: therfore commeth the lawe with his iudgement, fearyng and verynge the consciences. And yf ther be no helpe, it goeth thorow, so that they must nedes fall into dispayre, and be cõdempned for euer. Of this occasion doth S. Paule saye: By the lawe cõmeth but the knowlege of synne. Item, the lawe causeth but wrath.

Spiritual pasture & water.

The lawe

Rmo. 3.

Rmo. 4.

As for the gospell, it is a blessed worde.

The gospell.

It requyreth none suche of vs, but bryngeth vs tydynges of all good, namely, that God hath geuen vs poore synners his onely sõne to be our shepherde, to seke agayne vs famished and dispersed shepe, and to geue his lyfe for vs, that he myght so delyuer vs from synne, from euerlastynge death, and from the power of ỹ deuel. This is ỹ grene grasse and the fresh water, where wt the LORDE quyckeneth oure soules. And thus are we made lowse from euell cõsciences and heuy thoughtes. Of this shal we speake more in the .iiii. verse. He bryngeth me forth in the waye of ryghteousnesse.

Here (sayeth he) doth not the LORDE my faythfull shepherde leaue, ỹ he fedeth me in a grene medowe, & leadeth me to the fresh water, & so quickeneth my soule, but he bryngeth me forth also in the right waye, that I departe not asyde, go astraye, & so perysshe. That is, he holdeth me fast to the pure doctrine, that I be not deceaued by false spyrites, and that I fall not awaye by ony other temptacion or offence. Item, that I maye know, how I ought to leade myn outward conuersacion & lyfe, & that I suffre not my selfe to be perswaded by the holynes and straynte lyfe of ypocrites. Item, what is the

To be led in ỹ ryght way what it is.

true

true doctrine, fayth and seruice of God, &c.

This is now agayne a goodly frute & vertue of ỳ woꝛde of God, that they whiche cleue fast there vnto, do not onely receaue strength & cõfoꝛte of ỳ soule therby, but are pꝛeserued also from vntrue doctrine & false holynesse. Many mẽ optayne this treasure, but they can not kepe it. ffoꝛ as soone as a man is to bolde & pꝛesumptuous, and thynketh hymselfe sure of ỳ matter, it is done wt hym. Oꝛ euer he can loke aboute hym, he is deceaued. ffoꝛ the deuell also can pꝛetende holynesse, and transfoꝛme hymselfe into an angell of lyght, as saynt Paul sayeth: And euen so lykewyse can his mynysters shewe thẽselues, as though they were ỳ pꝛeachers of ryghteousnesse, & come ĩ shapes clothyng amonge the flocke of Chꝛyst, but inwardly are they rauenynge wolues. Therfoꝛe is it good here to watch & pꝛaye (as the pꝛophete doth in ỳ last verse) that our shepherd maye kepe vs by this treasure whiche he hath geuen vs. They ỳ do not this, certaynly they shall lese it. And the ende of that man (as Chꝛist sayeth) shall be woꝛse then the begynnynge. ffoꝛ they shall afterwarde become ỳ mooste poysened enemyes of Chꝛistes flock, and do moꝛe harme wt theyꝛ false doctryne, then the tyꝛauntes with the swearde. This had

An excellent vertue of Gods woꝛde.

Luce.11.

had saynt Paul well proued by the false Apostles, that made the Corinthians & Galathians to erre so soone, and afterwarde made diuision in all Asia. We se it our selues also this daye by the Anabaptistes and other false spretes. For his names sake.

The name of God.

The name of God is the preachyng of God, wherby he is magnifyed and knowen to be gracyous, mercyfull, longe sufferyng, true, faythfull, &c. which (not withstãdynge that we be the chyldren of wrath, and gyltye of euerlastynge death) forgeueth vs all our synnes, and taketh vs for his owne chyldrẽ and inheritours. This is his name, thys doth he cause to be proclamed by his worde. Thus wyll he be knowen, magnifyed, and honoured. And (accordynge vnto the fyrste commaundement) he wyl euen thus declare hym selfe towarde vs, as he hath caused it to be preached of hym. Lyke as he doth styll, strengtheth and quyckeneth our soules spiritually, and kepeth vs that we fall not in to errour, getteth vs lyuynge for our body, and preserueth vs from all misfortune.

This honoure ỳ he so is as we haue now sayd, is geuen hym onely of them that cleue fast vnto his worde, these beleue & confesse playnly, that all the gyftes & goodes whiche they haue goostly and bodely, they receaue them

them of God, euen of his mere grace & goodnesse. That is to saye: For his names sake, not for their owne workes and deseruynges. For this do they geue thankes vnto hym, and declare the same vnto other. This honour can not be geuen vnto God, of ony presumptuous iusticiaryes, as heretikes & false spretes, or enemyes and blasphemers of Gods worde, for they magnifye not his name, but their owne.

And though I walke in the valley of the shadowe of death, yet fear I no euell, for thou art with me. Thy staffe and thy shephooke do comforte me.

Hetherto hath the prophete declared, that they whiche haue & loue ỳ worde of God, cã lacke nothynge. For the LORDE is their shepherde, which doth not only fede thẽ in a grene pasture, & leadeth thẽ to the freshe water, ỳ they may be fat, stronge, and refreshed both bodely & goostly: but also taketh suche care for thẽ, ỳ they be not weery of the good pasture & fresh water, leauyng ỳ grene medowe, & departe agayne from the ryght way into the wylderneſſe. This is ỳ first parte of this Psalme. Nowe teacheth he farther how that they whiche are the shepe of thys shepeherde, be compassed aboute with many ieopardyes and misfortunes. Neuerthe- What the prophes

lesse

teacheth in this verse

lesse that LORDE (sayeth he) not onely defendeth the, but delyuered them also out of al tẽptacions & troubles. ffor he is amonge the. Nowe after what maner he is wt them, he declareth lykewyse well fauouredly.

Here thou seyst yt as soone as ỹ worde of God goeth forth, and as soone as ther be ony ỹ receaue it, & abide by it, immediatly ỹ deuell & all his angels steppe forth & moue the worlde wt all ỹ power therof agaynst it, to put it downe, & vtterly to destroye them ỹ haue it & knowlege it. ffor loke what our LORD god speaketh or doth, it must be tried & go thorow ỹ fyre. This is very nedfull for chrysten men to knowe, els myght they fayle & thynke thus in theyr myndes: How standeth this together: The prophet sayeth afore: The LORDE is my shepherd, I shall lacke nothynge. And here he sayeth cõtrary, namely, that he muste walke in the darke valley. And in the nexte verse followynge he confesseth that he hath enemyes? Where by he geueth sufficiently to vnderstand that he lacketh many, yee all thynges. ffor he that hath enemyes and lyeth in a darke valley, seyth no lyghte, that is to saye, he hath nother comforte nor hope, but is forsaken of euery man, and euery thynge is blacke & darke before his eyes, yee euẽ the fayre clear sonne.

Perlecucion.

Sõne. How is this true then that he shulde lacke nothynge?

Here must thou not ordre thy selfe after thyne owne eyes, & followe natural reason, as doth the worlde, vnto whome it is vnpossyble to se this ryche and glorious comforte of Chrysten men, that they shulde lacke nothynge. Yee certaynly they holde that the contrary is true, namely, that ther are no people vpon earth more poore, more mysserable, and more vnhappy then chrisien men: Yee with all theyr diligence & corage helpe they therto, that they maye be moost abhominably persecuted, bãnyshed, shamed, and put to death. And in so doynge, they thynke they do God seruyce therin. It appeareth therfore outwardly as though chrisien men were but shepe dryuen awaye and forsaken of God, and geuen ouer already into the wolues mouthes, and to be euen such, as lacke nothynge but altogether.

We maye not ordre our selues after ỳ our warde lyght.

Agayne, they that serue that greate God Mammon or the belly, appeare in the worlde, to be those good shepe whiche (as the Psalme sayeth) lacke nothynge: beynge rychely prouyded for of God, cõforted and preserued from all parell and myssortune. ffor they haue theyr owne hartes desyre, honoure, good, loye, pleasure, euery mans fauoure.

The seruaũtes of Mãmon.

noure, &c. Nother nede they be afrayed to be persecuted or put to death for ỳ faythes sake. ffor as longe as they put not theyr trust in Chryst the onely true shepherd, nor knowlege hym, whether they beleue on the deuell or his dãme, or do what so euer they wyll besyde with couetousnesse. &c. they are taken not onely for well doers therin, but also for the lyuyng sayntes, which byde styll by the olde fayth, and wyll not be deceaued thorowe heresye, whiche is (as Dauid teacheth here) that the LORD is onely is the shepeherde. So abhominable and greueous mortall synne is it to beleue on this shepeherde and to knowlege hym, that ther cam neuer suche a synne vpon earth. ffor euen the Popes holynes which els can dispense with all synnes and forgeue them, can not remytte this onely cryme.

The pope wyll not forgeue hym, that putteth his whole trust in Chryst.

Therfore (I saye) in this thynge do not thou followe the worlde & thyne owne reason, whiche whyle they iudge after the outwarde appearaunce, become foolysshe, & holde the prophete but for a lyar in that he sayeth: I shall lacke nothynge. But (as I sayde afore) holde thou the faste vnto the worde and promyses of God, herken vnto thy shepherde, how and what he sayeth vnto the, and ordre thy selfe accordynge vnto hys

voyce,

voyce, not accordynge to that which the eye seyth or ỹ harte feleth. And so haste thou the victory. Thus doth the prophete: he confesseth that he walketh in the valley of the shadowe of death. That is, that he is cõpassed aboute with trouble, heynesse, anguysshe, necessite, &c. as thou mayst se more at large in hys storyes, and other Psalmes. Item, that he hath nede of comforte, wherby it is sufficiẽtly declared that he is in heynesse. Item, that he hathe enemyes. And yet he sayeth: Though my tentacions were mo and greate, and though I were in a worse case: Yee though I were in deathes mouth alreadye, yet do not I feare onye myssortune. Not that I am able to helpe my selfe thorowe myne owne prouysion, trauayle, labour or succurre. Nother do I trust to myne owne wysdome, vertue, kynglye power, and ryches: ffor in thys matter, the helpe, counsel, comforte, and power of all men is farre to lytle.

Howe the Prophet behaueth hymselfe in tentacion & trouble.

But thys is it that doth it, euen that the LORDE is wyth me. As yf he wolde say: Certaynly of myne owne behalfe I am feble, in heynesse, vexed, and compassed aboute wyth al maner of parell and missortune. My harte also and conscience is not quyete, because of my synnes. I fele an hor-

rible fearfulnesse of death, and hel, so that I myght in a maner dispayre. But though al the worlde, yee and the gates of hell be set agaynst me, yet wyll I therfore not be dyscoraged. Yee I wyll not be afrayed for all the myssortune and payne that they are able to saye vpon me. For the LORDE is wyth me. The LORDE (I saye) whiche made heauen and earthe and all that therin is, vnto whom al creatures, angels, deuels, men, synne, death, &c. are subiecte. Summa, he that hath all thynges in hys owne power is my counselgeuer, my comforter, my defender, and helper: Therfore am I afrayed of no myssortune.

Asaph

After thys maner doth Asaph speake also in the. lxxii. Psalme, where he comforteth the Christen agaynst that greate stomblynge block, that the vngodlye haue such prosperyte vpon earth: And that the beloued sayntes of God on the other syde are euer plaged, &c. and sayeth: Yf I haue but the LORDE, I passe not vpon heauen nor earth. Though both body and soule shulde perysshe. Yet thou o God, arte the cõforte of my harte and my portion. Now after what maner the LORDE is wyth hym, he sheweth farther more, and sayeth,

Thy staf and thy shepehooke do com

forte

forte me.

The LORDE (sayeth he) is wyth me, but not bodely, that I may se or heare hym. Thys presence of the LORDE wherof I speake, is not comprehended wyth the fyue wyttes. Onely fayth seyth it. The same is sure, that the LORDE is nyer vnto vs, then we are to oure selues. Wherby? euen by the worde. Therfore sayeth he: Thy staf and thy shepehooke comforte me: As yf he wolde saye: In al my troubles and necessityes I fynde nothynge vpon earth, whereby I maye be helped to be at rest. Onely the worde of God is my staf & shepehooke where by I holde me, and stonde vp agayne. And sure I am lykewyse by it, that the LORDE is with me, and doth not onely strengthe and cõforte me by the same worde in all troubles and tentacions: but also delyuereth me from all myne enemyes, spyte of the deuell, and the worlde. Wyth these wordes: Thy staf and thy shepehooke do cõforte me. cõmeth he agayne vnto ỹ similitude of ỹ shepherde & the shepe, & wyll say thus much: Lyke as a bodely shepherde ruleth his shepe with the staf or shepehooke, & leadeth them to ỹ pasture & to fresh water, where they fynd meate and drynke, and defendeth them wyth the shepehooke a-

How the LORD is pẽsent wt many faithful men.

The similitude of ỹ shepherd

gaynſt all parell: Euen ſo doth the LORD the true ſhepeherde, gyde and rule me with hys ſtaf. That is to ſaye, with hys worde: to the intẽt that in hys ſyght I ſhuld walke wyth a good belefe and a mery conſcience, and knowe to beware of vntrue doctryne and falſe holyneſſe. Beſyde thys, he defendeth me alſo agaynſt al ieopardy and myſfortune, bodely and gooſtly, and deliuereth me from all myne enemyes wt his ſtaf, that is to ſaye, wyth the ſame worde doth he ſtrengthe and comforte me ſo rychelye, that ther is no myſſortune ſo greate, whether it be bodelye or goooſtlye, but I am able to come out of it, and to ouercome it.

this goeth ſpiritually to worke.

By thys thou ſeyſte that the prophete ſpeaketh here of no helpe, defence, or comforte of man. Nother draweth he out ony ſwearde. &c. It goeth here all ſecretely and preuelye to worke, euen by the worde. So that no man can ſpye thys defence & comforte, but onely they that beleue. And here doth Dauid wryte a generall rule for all Chriſten men, whiche is well to be noted: Namelye, that ther is none other meane waye vpon earth for onye man to be deliuered out of all tentations, ſaue onely to caſt all hys burthen vpon God, and to hold hym faſte by hys worde of grace, to beleue

ſure-

surelye vnto it, and in no wyse to suffre it to be taken frō hym. Who so doth thys, can be content, whether he be in prosperite or aduersyte, whether he lyue or dye. And fynally he can endure, and must nedes prosper agaynst all deuels, the worlde, and mysfortune. Thys me thynke is a greate prayse of the good worde of God, and a greater power is ascrybed here vnto it, then is the power of all angels & men. Thus doth S. Paule prayse it also Rom. i. The Gospell (sayeth he) is the power of God, for the saluacion of all them that beleue thereon.

The office of preachinge

And with thys doth the prophet touche the offyce of preachynge, for by the mouthly preachynge of the worde whiche goeth in at the eares, and that the harte taketh holde vpon thy fayth, and by ỹ holy sacramentes doth oure LORDE God bringe all thys to passe in his Christen congregaciō, namely, to the intent that the people maye haue fayth, be strenthed in belefe, and preserued in the true doctryne. Item, that they maye fynally endure agaynst all temptacions of the deuell and the worlde. For sence the begynnynge of the worlde hathe God dealte thus with all his sayntes by his worde, and besyde the same hath he geuē thē outwarde tokens of grace. This I saye because that no man shuld take vpō hym without these

meanes to medle with God, or to chose hym selfe a peculyar waye vnto heauen, els shall he fall and breake his necke, as the pope and his hath done. And as the Anabaptistes & other seditious spretes do yet this daye.

And with these wordes: Thy staffe and thy shepehooke do comfort me wyll the prophete shewe some speciall thynge. As yf he wolde say: Moses is a shepherde lykwyse, and hath also a staffe & a shephooke: neuertheless he doth nothynge els but cõpell and punysshe his shepe, and ouerladeth thẽ with an intollerable burthen, Act. xv. Esay. ix. Therfore is he a fearfull & a terrible shepeherde, of whõ the shepe are afrayed, and flye from hym. Neuertheless þ LORDE with thy staffe and shephooke, compellest not thy shepe, nother makest them afrayd, nor ouerchargest them, but geuest them comforte.

Therfore speaketh he here of the office of preachynge the newe Testament, whereby tydynge is brought vnto the worlde, that Christ came vpon earthe to saue synners: and therby hath optayned them suche a saluacion, that he hath geuen hys lyfe for them. All they that beleue thys shall not perysshe: but haue euerlastynge lyfe. Joh. iii.

The staf & shephoke

Thys is the staf and shephooke, wherby the soules take refreshynge, comforte, and ioye.

Wher-

Wherfore in the ſpirytuall ſhepefolde, that is to ſaye, in the kyngdome of Chriſte, ther ought none other lawe to be preached, but the Goſpell, which the prophet with ornate wordes calleth the ſtaf and ſhephooke of cõforte, whereby they be ſtrengthed in fayth, refreſſhed in theyr hartes, and receaue conſolacion in all maner of troubles, and euen at the poynt of death.

what they be that lede Chriſtes ſhepe in a greene medowe

They that ſo preach, vſe the ſpirytuall ſhepherdes offyce aryght, fede the ſhepe of Chriſt in a greene medowe, leade them to the freſh water, refreſh theyr ſoules, kepe them that they be not deceaued, & comforte them with the ſtaf and ſhephooke of Chriſt, &c. And where thou heareſt ſuche one, be ſure thou heareſt Chriſt hymſelfe. Suche men alſo oughte to be taken for true ſhepherdes: that is to ſaye, for the mynyſters of Chriſt, and the ſtewardes of God. Nother oughte it to be regarded, that the worlde cryeth out vpon them, and calleth them heretikes and deceauers. Agayne, they ỳ teach ony thynge els contrarye to the Goſpell, cauſynge men to truſt to theyr owne workes, merites, & to theyr owne fayned holineſſe, theſe no doute, though they boaſt the neuer ſo muche to be the ſucceſſours of the Apoſtles, & decke themſelues with the name and tytle of the Chri-

stenchurch, yee though they rayſed vp dead men, yet are they wolues and murtherers: whiche spare not the flocke of Christ, scatter them abrode, torment them, and kyll the not onely spiritually, but bodely also, as me mayese now before theyr eyes.

The names that the worde of God hath in this Psalme.

Lyke as the prophete here afore doth call Gods worde or the gospell, grasse, water, the ryght waye, a staffe, & a shephooke: Euen so afterwarde in the fyfth verse he calleth it, a table prepared, an oyntment, & a full cuppe. And thys similitude of the table, oyntmẽt, and cuppe doth he take out of the olde testament from the Gods seruyce of the Iewes, and sayeth euen in a maner the same that he had sayd afore, namely, ỹ they whiche haue the worde of God, are rychely prouyded for in all poyntes, both concernynge the soule, and body, saue onely ỹ he speaketh it here wyth other fygures and allegories. ffyrst bryngeth he in the similitude of the table, where vpon the shewebreads laye contynually. Exod. xxv. xl. And then declareth he what the same dyd signifyeth, and sayeth:

A table.

Thou prepareſt a table before me agaynſt myne enemyes, thou anoynteſt myne heade wyth oyle, and fylleſt my cuppe full,

Here

Here doth he knowlege playnly, that he hath enemyes. But he sayeth he kepeth hym from them, and dryueth them backe, by this meanes, namely, because the LORDE hath prepared a table before hym agaynst those his enemyes. Is not this a wonderfull defender? I wolde haue thought he shulde haue prepared before hym a stronge wall, a myghtye bulwarke, depe dyches, armour, and other harnesse & weapens, where by he myght be sure from his enemyes, and discomfite them. And now cōmeth he and prepareth before hym a table, to eate and drynke on, and so to smyte hys enemyes. There coulde I be content to fyght also, yf the enemyes myghte be ouercome without ony ieopardye, care, trauayle and laboure. And I to do nothynge els but to syt at a table, to eate and drynke and be mery.

With these wordes: Thou prepareste a table before me agaynst myne enemyes, The great power of Gods worde. wil ỳ prophet declare, ỳ great excellēt, & wōderful power of the worde of God. As yf he wolde say: Thou offreste me such kyndnesse (OLORDE) and fedest me so well and rychely at thy table, whiche thou haste prepared for me, that is: Thou endueste me so plenteously with the exceadynge knowlege of thy good worde, so that thorow the same

I haue not onely plenteous conſolacion inwardly in my harte: agaynſt myne owne euell conſcience, agaynſt feare and dꝛede of death, and ỹ wꝛath and tudgemẽt of God: but outwardly alſo thoꝛowe ỹ ſame woꝛde I am become ſo valeaunt and ſo inuincible a giaunt, ỹ al myne enemyes can bꝛyng nothynge to paſſe agaynſt me. The moꝛe wꝛoth, madde, and vnreaſonable they are agaynſt me, the leſſe I regarde it. Yee I am ſo much the moꝛe quyete in my ſelfe, glad & content. And that of none other occaſion, ſaue onely ỹ I haue thy woꝛde. The ſame geueth me ſuch power and coꝛage agaynſt all myne enemyes: So that whan they rage fearſly and are mooſt madde of all, I am better content in my mynde, then yf I ſatte at a table where I myght haue all that my harte coulde deſyꝛe, meate, dꝛynke, myꝛthe, pleaſure, mynſtrelſye, &c.

An hye cõmendaciõ of Gods woꝛde.

There heareſt thou agayne, how hyghly this holy Dauid magnifyeth & pꝛayſeth the good woꝛde of God, namely: how that by the ſame, they that beleue, ouercome and wynne the victoꝛy, agaynſt the deuell, the woꝛlde, the fleſhe, ſynne, a mans owne conſcience, and agaynſt death. ffoꝛ yf a man haue the woꝛde, and take ſure holde of it by fayth, then muſt all theſe enemyes (whiche

els

ies are inuincible) be fayne to geue backe, and to yelde them selues. And it is a marualous victory and power, yee and a very stoute boastynge of suche as beleue, ỳ they subdue and ouercome all these horrible (yee and in maner almyghtye) enemyes, not wt ragynge, not wyth bytynge, not wyth resystynge, not with strykyng agayne, not with takynge of vengeaunce, not wyth sekynge of counsell and helpe here and there: but wt eatynge, drynkynge, pleasure, syttynge, beynge merry and takyng of rest. Which thynges (as it is sayde afore) come all to passe thorowe the worde. For to eate and drynke is called in the scripture, to beleue, to take sure holde on Gods worde, wherout ther followeth, peace, ioye, comforte, strẽgth, &c.

To eate and drynke what it is

Natural reason can geue no iudgemẽt in this wonderfull victory of the faythfull, for here commeth the matter to passe cleane contrarye to the outwarde senses of man. The worlde doth alwaye persecute & slaye the Christen, as the mooste hurtfull people vpon earthe. Now whan naturall reason seyth thys, it can not thynke otherwyse but that the Christen lye vnder: & agayne, that theyr enemyes preuayle and haue the victory. Thus dyd the Jewes intreate Christe, the Apostles, and the faythfull, and put thẽ

The naturall reason of man.

euer

euer to execucion. Whan they had slayne them, or at the leest banished thē, then cryed they: Now haue we ỹ victory: these fellowes that haue hurte vs, shall now trouble vs nomore: Now shall we handle euery thyng as we wyll. But whan they thought themselues to haue bene surest of all, our LORD & God sent vpon them the Romaynes, whiche dealte so horribly wyth them, that it is a terrible thynge to heare. Then after certayne hundreth yeares, as for the Romaynes (whiche thorow oute all the empyre of Rome had slayne manye thousande martyrs) God rewarded them afterward, and suffred the cytie of Rome in few yeares to be four tymes spoyled by ỹ Gothies and Vandalyes, & finally to be brent, destroyed, and the empyre to decaye. Who had now ỹ victory? The Jewes and Romaynes that shed the bloud of sayntes, lyke water? or the poore Christen, that suffred them selues to be ordred lyke slaughter shepe, and had none other harnesse and weapen, but the good worde of God?

How it goeth with the multitude of the that beleue in Christe.

Thus doth Dauid declare wyth these wordes, howe it goeth wyth the holy Christen congregaciō, (for he speaketh not here of his owne person only) setteth her forth in hyr coloures, and describeth her well fauoured.

wouredly, Namely: how that in the syghte of God, she is euen as a pleasaunt grene medowe, whiche hath plentye of grasse and fresshe water. That is to say, that she is the paradyse and pleasaũt garden of God, garnyssshed wyth all hys gyftes, and hath hys vnoutspeakeable treasure, the holy Sacramentes, and that good worde, wherewyth he instructeth, gydeth, refresheth, and cõforteth his flocke. But in the syght of ỹ worlde hath thys congregacion a farre other appearaunce, euẽ as though she were a blacke darke valleye, where a man can se nother pleasure, nor ioye: but trouble, sorowe, and aduersyte. For the deuell wyth al his power setteth hym selfe agaynst it, for thys treasures sake. Inwardly plageth he the congregacion of God wyth hys venymous fyrye dartes: Outwardly treadeth he her downe by sectes and offences. Then kyndleth he also hys brande vpon her, euen the worlde, which mynystreth vnto her all sorowe and heuynesse of harte, ỹ persecutynge, sklaundrynge, blasphemynge, condemnynge, and murthurynge: In so muche that it were no wõder that deare flock of Christ were vtterly destroyed in the twynclynge of an eye, by such greate soltytye and myght, both of the deuell, and of the worlde. For she cã not

kepe

kepe her selfe from hyr enemyes, they are farre to stronge, to deceatfull and to myghtye for her. She is euen as the prophet doth here describe her: An innocent, symple, and wapenlesse lambe, whiche nother wyll nor can do ony mā harme, but is alway readye not onely to do good, but also to take euell for good. Howe happeneth it then that the congregacion of Christ in such weaknesse, can escape the craftinesse and tyrāny of the deuell and the worlde? The LORDE is hyr shepeherde, therfore lacketh she nothynge. He fedeth and refresheth her, goostlye and bodely, he kepeth her in the rycht waye, he geueth her also hys staf and shephooke in steade of a swearde, whiche she beareth not in the hand, but in the mouth. And not onely comforteth the sorowfull therwyth, but dryueth awaye the deuell also and all hys Apostels, be they neuer so sotyll and spitefull. Besydes thys, the LORDE hath prepared for her also a table, and Easter lambe. When hyr enemyes are verye wrothfull, gnasshe theyr tethe together ouer her, are mad, vnreasonable, in a rage, and out of theyr wyttes, and take all theyr sotyltye, power, and myghte to helpe them, for to destroye her vtterlye: Then doth the beloued bryde of Christe set her downe at

Howe the flocke of Christ winneth.

hyr

hys LORDES table, eateth the Easter-lambe, drinketh of the fresh water, is mery, and syngeth: The LORDE is my shepherde, I shall lacke nothynge. These are hys weapens and gönes wherwith she hath hetherto smytten & ouercome all hys enemyes, and after the same maner shall she haue the victorye styll vnto domes daye. The more also that the deuell and ꝑ worlde doth hurt & vexe her, ꝑ better is it with her. For hys edifyenge and increase stondeth in persecution, affliction, and death. Out of thys occasion dyd one of the olde fathers saye: The bloud of martyrs is a sede, where one is caste, there ryse an hundreth vp a-gayne. Of thys wonderfull victorye synge certayne Psalmes, as the. ix. x. &c. After thys same maner haue I also (thorowe the grace of God) behaued my selfe thys eyghtene yeare: I haue euer suffred myne enemyes to be wroth, to threate, to blaspheme and condemne me, to cast theyr heades styll agaynst me, to ymagin many euell wayes, & to vse diuerse vnthryftye poyntes. I haue suffred them to take wonderous greate thought howe they myght destroye me and myne (yee gods) doctrine. Moreouer I haue ben glad and merye (but more at one tyme then at another,) and not greatlye regarded

A notable sayenge

The authour of this boke

theyr

theyr ragynge, & madnesse, but haue holden me by the staf of cõforte, and had recourse vnto the LORDES table. That is: I haue cõmitted ỳ cause vnto God, wherin he hath so led me, ỳ I haue optayned all my wil and mynde. And in the meane tyme haue I done lytle or nothinge, but spoke vnto hym a pater noster, or some lytle Psalme. This is al my harnesse, wherwith I haue defended me hetherto, not only agaynst myne enemyes. but also thorow the grace of god, brought so much to passe, that whan I loke behynde me, & call to remẽbraunce how it hath stond in ỳ Papistrye, I do eue wonder ỳ ỳ matter is come so farre. I wold neuer haue thought ỳ the tenth parte shulde haue come to passe as it is now before oure eyes. He that hath begon it, shal bringe it well to an ende. Yee though nyne helles and worldes were set on an heap together agaynst it. Let euery Christen man therfore learne thys science, namely, ỳ he hold hym by this staf & shepehooke, & resort vnto this table, whan heuynesse, or ony other myssortune is at hande. And so shall he (doutles) receaue strength & cõforte agaynste euery thyng that oppresseth hym.

The oyntment.

The second similitude is of ỳ oyntmẽt, wherof ther is mẽcio made ofttymes in the holy scripture. It was some precious oyle,

as Balme, or els som other swete smellinge water, & the vse was to anoynte the kynges & prestes withal. Whan the Jewes also held theyr solemne feastes, and were disposed to be mery, they dyd anoynte or sprenkle themselues wt such precious oyntmēt, as Christe declared lykewyse in the sixte of Mathewe, wher he sayeth: whan thou fastest, anoynte thyne heade, and wash thy face, &c. The vse then of this oyntmēt was had among those people, whan they were disposed to be mery & glad. Lyke as ỳ Magdalene also thought to make the LORDE mery, whan she poured vpon hys heade the precious water of Nardus, for she sawe that he was heuy.

The fayre cuppe.

The thyrde similitude is of the cuppe, which they broughte in they? Gods seruice, whan they offered drynke offerynges, and were merye before the LORDE. Wyth these wordes then: Thou anoyntest my head With oyle, and fillest my cuppe ful wyll the prophete describe the greate ryche comforte which they that are faythfull haue by ỳ worde of God, so that theyr consciences are quyete, glad, and at rest in the myddes of all tentacions and troubles. Yee euen of death. As yf he wold saye: doutlesse the LORDE maketh me a maruaylous man of warre, and harnesseth me wonderously a-

The ryche comfort of christē mē

gaynst myne enemyes. I thought he shulde haue put materiall harnesse vpon me, set an helmet vpon myne heade, geue me a sweard in my hande, & haue warned me to be circūspecte, & to take diligent hede to my matter, lest myne enemyes shulde ouertake me.

Nowe commeth he and setteth me downe at a table, and prepareth me a goodly banket, anoynteth myne heade with precious Balme. Or (after the maner of our contry) setteth a garlande vpon myne heade, as yf I shulde go to some pastyme or daūsynge, and not fyght with myne enemyes. And to ỹ intent that ther shulde be no scarcenesse, he fylleth my cuppe full, ỹ I maye drynke, make, good chere, & be dronken. The table thē prepared is my harnesse, the precious oyntmēt is my helmet, & the ful cuppe is my sweard. With these do I ouercome all myne enemies. Is not this a maruailous preparyng to warre, & yet a more wonderfull victory? Thus wyll he saye: LORDE, thy gestes. whiche, syt at thy table, that is to saye, the faythfull shall not onely be stronge and valeaunt giauntes agaynst al theyr enemyes, but they shalbe mery also and dronken. For why? thou makest them good chere, as a riche hoost vseth to do to his gestes: thou fedest them well, thou makest them lusty & glad,

Spirituall dronkennesse

glad, thou fyllest into them so muche, that they must nedes be dronke. This is al done by the worde of grace. ffor by the same doth the LORDE oure shepherde fede and strengthe so the hartes of his faythfull, that they dare defye al theyr enemyes, and say wt the prophete: I am not afrayed for thousandes of the people that cõpasse me rounde aboute. Psalme. iii. And here afore in the fourth verse: I fear no euell, for thou LORDE art with me. With this (yee euen thorow the same) worde, doth he geue them also the holy goost, whiche maketh them not onely to take good stomackes vnto them, & to be of good corage, but so quyet also in thẽ selues and mery, that for the same great exceadynge ioye, they are euen dronken.

This must be spiritually vnderstande.

He speaketh here then of a spirytuall strength, of a spirituall myrth, and of a spirituall dronkẽnes, which is a godly strẽgth Rom. i. A ioye (as saynt Paul calleth it) in the holy goost. Rom. xiiii. And a blessed dronkennesse, whan people are not full of wyne, (wherout followeth incõuenience,) but full of the holy goost. Ephe. v. This is the harnesse & the weapens, wherwith our LORD God prepareth his faythfull agaynst the deuell and the worlde, namely, in theyr mouth geueth he them hys worde, and in theyr

harte he geueth corage, that is to saye, the holy goost. Wyth suche ordinaunce put they from them all feare, and wyth gladnesse bukle they wyth all theyr enemyes, smyte them, and ouercome them with all theyr myght, wysedome, and holynesse. Such souldyers were the Apostels on whitsondaye, whan they went vp to Jerusalem agaynste the commaundement of the Emperoure and the hye prestes (and ordred thē selues, as yf they had ben very goddes, and all the other but greshoppers) and went euen thorowe with all power and ioye, as yf they had benedronken. In so muche ỳ some had them in derision therfore, & sayd: They were full of swete wyne. Neuertheless S. Peter declared out of the prophet Joel, that they were not full of swete wyne, but ful of the holy goost. And so he smote aboute hym with hys swearde, that is: he opened his mouth, and preached the worde of God, and felled downe thre thousande soules at once from the power of the deuell. Actu. ii.

This strength, ioye, and blessed dronkennesse doth not onely shewe it selfe in the faythfull, whan they be in prosperite & haue peace, but also whan they suffre and dye. As whan the counsell at Jerusalem caused the Apostles to be beaten, they were glad of it,

et, that they were worthy to suffre rebuke for the name of Christe, Actu.v. And in the v. to the Romaynes doth saynt Paule say: We reioyce also in troubles. &c. Afterwarde were ther many martyrs also, whiche with mery harte and laughynge mouthes wente vnto theyr death, as yf they had gone to some pastyme or daunce: Lyke as we reade of saynt Agnes, and saynt Agatha (whyche were virgins. xiii. or .xiiii. yeare olde,) and of other mo, whiche were of suche inwarde corage and confydence, that they dyd not onely ouercome the deuell and the worlde by theyr death, but also made good chere euen then with theyr hartes, as though they had ben dronken of very ioye. And this greueth the deuell excedynge sore, namely, whā men are at suche quyetnesse in them selues, that they despyse his great myght and gyle. In our tyme also haue ther be many which for the knowlege of Christe haue bene glad to suffre death. We se more ouer that ther be many, whyche wyth perfecte vnderstondynge and fayth dye vpon theyr beddes, and saye wyth Simeon: LORDE, now letteste thou thy seruaunt departe in peace, &c. that it is a ioye to beholde thē, of whom I haue sene many my selfe. And all thys commeth because that (as the prophete sayeth) they

The stedfast & ioyfull hartes of them ꝑ haue fulfred death for ꝯ word of God.

beanoynted with the oyle, whiche the. xliiii. Psalme calleth the oyle of gladnesse, and because they haue dronke of the full cuppe whiche the LORDE hath fylled.

Obiection. Yee but thou wylt saye: I fele not my selfe yet so apte, that I coulde be content to

Answere. dye. &c. That maketh no matter. Dauid also (as it is sayd afore) hath not bene sure of that science at all houres, but somtyme complayned that he was cast out of gods syght. Other holy men also haue not alwaye had an hartye confidence towarde God, and a perpetuall delyte and pacience in theyr troubles and temptacions. Saynt Paul somtyme is so sure & certayne in hym selfe, and maketh suche boast of Christe, that he careth not for the curse of ỹ law, for synne, death, nor for the deuell. I lyue not nowe (sayeth he. Galat. ii.) but Christe lyueth in me. Item: I desyre to be lowsed and to be with Christ. Phil i. Item: Who shall separate vs from the loue of God, whiche spared not is owne sonne, but hath geuen hym for vs all? How shall he not with hym geue vs al thynges also? Shal trouble, anguysh, persecucion, swearde, &c. separate vs from hym? Ro. viii. There speaketh he of death, of the deuell, and of all euell with suche a corage, as yf he were the strongest and grea

Note this well.

test

test of all sayntes, vnto whom death were but a sporte. But incontinently in another place, he speaketh as thoughe he were the weakest and greatest synner vpon earth. 1. Cor. ii. I was with you (sayeth he,) in weaknesse, in feare, and in muche tremblynge. I am carnall, solde vnder synne, and take prysoner in the lawe of synne, whiche is in my membres. O wretched man that I am, who shall delyuer me frō the body of this deathe? Roma. vii. And in the fyfth to the Galath. he teacheth that in the sayntes of God ther is a continual stryfe of ỹ flesshe agaynst the spirite. &c. Therfore oughtest thou not immediatly to dispayre, though thou feleste thy selfe feble and faynthearted, but praye diligently that thou mayest endure by ỹ worde, and increace in the fayth and knowlege of Christ. As the prophete doth here, & teacheth other men lykewyse so to do, and sayeth:

Oh let thy louynge kyndnesse and mercy followe me all the dayes of my lyfe, that I maye dwell in the house of the LORDE for euer.

For as muche as the deuell neuer ceasseth to plage the faythfull inwardly with feare, outwardely wyth deceatfulnesse of false doctours or teachers, and with the violence of tyrauntes: he prayeth here therfore

at the ende earnestly, that God which hath geuen hym this treasure, wyl kepe hym fast by it also vnto the ende. And sayeth: O gracyous God shewe me such fauour, that thy louynge kyndnesse and mercy maye followe me all the dayes of my lyfe. And immediatly he declareth what he calleth this louynge kyndnesse and mercy, namely, that he maye remayne in the house of the LORDE for euer. As yf he wolde saye: Thou haste begonne the matter, thou hast geuen me thy holy worde, and accepted me amonge them that are thy people, whyche do knowlege, prayse and geue thankes vnto the, graunt me therfore such grace from hēce forth, that I maye continue styll by the same worde, & neuer to be separated more from thy holy Christen flocke. Thus doth he praye also in the. xxvi. Psalme. One thinge (sayeth he) haue I desyred of the LORDE, whyche I wolde fayne haue: namely, ỳ I maye dwell in the house of the LORDE al the dayes of my lyfe, to beholde the fayre bewty of the LORDE (that is to saye, the true seruyce of God) and to vysite his temple.

Why the prophet maketh this prayer.

A notable ensample.

The prophete then here by his ensample teacheth and exhorteth all suche as put theyr trust in God, ỳ they be not careles, proude, or presūptuous in them selues, but

to

to feare and geue them ſelues vnto prayer, that they leſe not this treaſure. And doutleſſe this earneſt exhortacion ſhulde ſteare vs vp, and make vs feruent vnto diligent prayer. ffor ſeynge that holy Dauid whiche was a prophete, ſo hyghly endued with all maner of godly wyſedome and knowlege, and with diuerſe greate excellent gyftes of God. Seynge he (I ſaye) dyd praye ſo ofte and with ſuch great earneſt, that he myghte abyde by thys treaſure. Much more ſhall it be mete for vs (whiche are vtterly nothynge to be compared vnto hym, and lyue alſo nowe at the ende of the worlde, whan as Chriſte and the Apoſtles ſaye, it ſhalbe an horryble and perylous tyme,) it ſhalbe muche more conuenient (I ſaye) to watch and praye wyth all earneſt and diligence, that we maye contynue in the houſe of the LORDE all the dayes of oure lyfe, namely, that we maye heare the worde of God, and receaue the manyfolde commodityes and frutes that come of it, (as it reharſed afore,) and continue in the ſame vnto the ende. Which graunte vs Chriſt, our onely ſheperde and Saueoure.

We haue moſt nede to watch & praye.

AMEN.

BRITISH
11 JY 1912
MUSEUM

¶ How and whether a Christē mā ought to flye the horryble plage of the Pestilence.

¶ A Sermon out of the .xci. Psalme Qui habitat in adiuto-

By Andrewe Osiander.

¶ Translated out of hygh Almayne into Englyshe.

A Sermon out of the Psalme, Qui habitat. &c. how and vnto what place a Christen man ought to flye the horrible plage of the pestilence.

FOr as much as Almyghty God doth vyset, handle, and punysshe the contry and region wyth the horrible and fearfull plage of the pestilence, and many folkes (after an vnmanerly fashion) are so afrayed therof, that ther be herde and sene of them all maner of vncostumable wordes and workes, whiche become not well a Christen man: And seynge that all the dedes of charite whyche one Christen man is bounde to shewe vnto another (no lesse thē vnto Christ him selfe,) are perlously omytted, wherby then ryseth all maner of sklaunder to the weake, and mysreporte vnto ỹ holy Gospell: I thought it profitable and necessary to bestowe vpon youre charite in this case a shorte instruccion and comforte out of the holy scripture, to the intent that the ignoraunt maye be taughte, the weake strengthed, and euery one counselled after hys callynge to serue his neghbour. And I wyll take for me ỹ. xci. Psalme, which soundeth after thys maner:

Who

A Sermon
The.xci.pſalme.

Who ſo ſytteth vnder the defence of the hygheſt, and abydeth vnder the ſhadowe of the Almyghtye,

He ſayeth vnto the LORDE: My hope, and my ſtronge holde: my God on whom I truſt.

For he delyuereth me from the ſnare of the hunter, and from the noy ſome peſtilence.

He ſhall couer the wyth hys fe-thers, and thy truſte ſhalbe vnder hys wynges: hys truth is ſpeare and ſhylde.

So that thou nedeſt not to fear for the horrybleneſſe of the nyghte, for the arowes that flye by daye tyme.

For the peſtilence that commeth preuely in the darke, for the ſyckeneſſe that deſtroyeth in the noone daye.

Though a thouſãde fall at thy ſyde, and ten thouſande at thy ryght hande, yet ſhall it not come nye the.

Yee wyth thyne eyes ſhalte thou ſe thy deſyre, and beholde, howe the vn-godly ſhalbe rewarded.

BUt afore we come to the vnderstō dynge of these comfortable wordes, your charite shal fyrst knowe that it is not my meanyng to forbyd or inhibite ony man to flye or to vse phisycke, or to auoyde daungerous and sycke places in these fearfull ayres, so farre as a man doth not therin agaynst the belefe, nor Gods cōmaundement, nor agaynst his callynge, nor agaynst ỹ loue of his neghboure. ffor though some wyl saye: Such plage toucheth no man, but those that be ordeyned of God thereonto, lyke as ther be certayne ensamples therof fōude in the holy scripture: Namely how ỹ Ezech. 9. and Apoca. vii. ther was sent an angel, which afore hāde marked ỹ vertuous & electe, or euer it was charged & cōmaūded ỹ seconde angell to smyte (with pestilence or other plages) those ỹ were not marked. Neuertheles agaynst that it myght be sayde: Good syr, thoughe it wente so at suche a tyme in suche places, who maketh vs sure yet nowe, that it shall therfore chaunce so in all other deathes of the contry? Therfore wyll I now at this tyme let all suche thynges continue in theyr worthynesse and fre, lyke as all other natural thynges, whiche be subiecte and committed vnto oure reason to rule. But as for the Thyr

What cases retayn a man in daungerous places.

Ezech. 9. Apoc. 7. & 9. 12

sten, whiche (by reason of offyce, or for pouerte sake, or for other reasonable causes) can not, or be not mynded to flye, I wyll here withall shewe them theyr best and hyghest comforte that they haue.

In lyke maner, I wyll not entre agaynst them, that speake naturally therof: and saye: Suche plage commeth out of the influence of the starres, out of ỹ worckynge of the Cometes, out of ỹ vnseasonable wether and alterynge of the ayre, out of the Southe wyndes, out of stynkynge waters, or out of foule mystes of the grounde: For such wysedome of theyrs wyll we leaue vnto them vndespysed, and not fyght there agaynst: But (as Christen men) we wyll holde vs vnto the worde of God, the same wyll we suffre to be oure moost hye wysedome, and geue credẽce vnto it, and follow it: and so shall we fynde muche better and surer instruccion: Namely, that this horrible plage of the pestilence commeth out of Gods wrath, because of the despysynge and transgressynge of his godly cõmaundementes. For thus sayeth the holy prophete Moses in the fyft boke, the.xxviii. Chapter.

The cause of pestilẽce and lyke diseases.

The chefe causes of pestilence is Gods wrath.

Deu. 28.

Yf thou wylt not herken vnto the voyce of the LORDE thy God, to obserue and kepe all hys commaundementes

dementes and ordinaunces whiche I commaunde the, then shal all these curses come vpon the, &c. And it followeth: The LORDE shall cause the pestilence to endure longe wyth the: the LORDE shall smyte the wyth swellynge, feuer, heate, burnynge, blastynge, drouth, &c. and shall persecute the tyll he vtterly destroye the, and brynge the to naught.

And certaynly this is the playne truth and the very originall of these plages. No man ought to doute theron. For thoughe the forsayd natural causes do somwhat also thereto, yet is it sure and vndouted, that the same causes be sent and steared vp oute of Gods wrath for our synne and vnthankfulnesse. And truely that it is euen so, the holy scripture declareth, not wyth bare wordes onely, but sheweth it also wyth notable ensamples. For in the fourth boke of Moses the fourtenth Chapter, whan all the spyes (excepte Josua and Caleb) spake euell of the lãde of promyse, and made the people vnpaciente and vprouryssye, so that they chose them a captayne, and thought to go agayne into Egypte, and to stone Moses and Aaron, (which commaunded them the contrarye) we reade thus: Then appeared the glorye of the LORDE, and spake vnto

Moses

Moses: howe longe doth thys people blaſpheme me? And howe longe wyll they not beleue me, for all the tokens that I haue done vpon them: therfore wyll I ſmytte and deſtroye them with peſtilence, and make of the a grater nacion then thys.

Lykewyſe alſo whan Dauid cauſed the people to be nombred agaynſte Gods commaundemēt, he diſpleaſed the LORDE God horibly therwith. Therfore layed he the punyſhment vpon hym, ſo that he was fayne to chooſe hym ſelfe whether he had rather haue, ſeuen yeares derth, or thre monethes myſchaunce in battayl, or thre dayes peſtilence in the lande. And whan he choſe the peſtilence, ther dyed in thre dayes ſeuentye thouſande men, as it is wrytten in the laſte Chapter of the.ii. boke of Samuel.

Seynge then that out of the word of God we knowe the very cauſe of thys horryble plage: Namely, that it is the defaute of our ſynnes, as vnbelefe, diſobedience & vnthankfulneſſe: therfore before all thynges it ſhall be neceſſary, that we refrayne from the ſame, repent, and amende our lyues. Yf we wyll els be preſerued and delyuered from thys horrible plage. ffor yf God punyſh vs because of ſynne, it is good to conſydre that we muſt fyrſt knowlege and eſchue our ſynnes, in caſe

Yf we amẽde not God contynueth ī punyshynge.

that he shall withdrawe and take awaye hys wrath & punyshment from vs. ffor yf we cõtinue in our euell, synfull, and culpable lyfe, certaynly he shal not ceasse with the punyshment, but go forth more & more, tyll he geue and recompence accordynge to our workes. But yf we knowlege our synne, refrayne frõ it, repent, and axe grace, thẽ shall he also take awaye hys wrath. And thys horrible wrath (with other heuy burthens as warre & derth that lye vpon oure neck) shall he mercyfully take away from vs agayne. As holy Paule sayeth. i Cor. xi. Yf we iudged our selues, we shulde not be iudged: But whan we are iudged, we be chastened of the LORDE, that we shulde not be damned with the worlde.

And out of all thys maye youre charyte well perceaue, howe vnwyselye and vnthryftenly they do, ẏ out of inordinate feare, of thys plage leaue theyr callynge and office, maliciously wythdrawyng the loue, helpe, & faythfulnesse, which they (out of gods commaundement) are bounde to shewe vnto theyr neghbours, and so do synne greuously agaynst the commaundement of God. ffor certaynly they do but steare vp the wrath of God more earnestly agaynste themselues, that he may the sooner take hold vpon them, and pluck them awaye with thys plage. ffor

men

men maye heare on euery syde, that some do shone and flye not only the syck, but also the whole: Yee (that yet moze foolyshe is) euen the platters and candelstyckes whiche come out of straũge houses, as though death dyd surely styck therin. And (out of suche fonde chyldyshe feare) it commeth, that not onely some syck folkes be suffred to dye away without all keppynge, helpe, and comforte, but the wemen also greate wyth chylde be forsaken in theyr nede, or els commeth there vtterly no man vnto them. Yee a man maye heare also, that the chyldren forsake theyr fathers and mothers, and one household body kepeth hymselfe awaye from another, and sheweth no loue vnto hym: Whyche neuertheles he wolde be glad to se shewed vnto hymselfe, yf he laye in lyke necessite. A pyteous case.

Howbeyt I suppose ther come not manys such chaunces to passe, neuertheless I must speake therof that it be done nomoze from hencefozth. For certaynly it is vnwyselye & vnchristenly handled: & we nede not thynke that the same is the waye to escape thys plage, but rather an occasion that it raygne the moze myghtely ouer vs. For seynge it is sure (as ye haue herde afoze) that such plage is sent for punyshment of oure synnes, and Christe hath geuen vs a new cõmaundemẽt The moze we flye the punishment, the farther

daunger we rūne in

that we shulde loue one another (as he hath loued vs) it followeth, that the farther we departe from the loue of our neghboure, the more we lade synne vpō vs, and deserue thys plage but the more. Agayne the more diligētlye that we take hede vnto the loue of oure neghboure, the surer shall we be from thys plage: No man nedeth to doute therof.

No man ought to prease in the daūger wythout necessite.

But here wythall wyll I also counsell or compell no man, to ony vnnedeful daunger, (that he is not bounde vnto by his callynge, nor by loue,) but onely warne those, whyche for feare leaue that whiche they are bounde to do before God: To the intent that for suche naked feares sake, they do not transgresse nor omytte the commaundemēt of God, & hope by synne to escape this plage, which neuertheless cōmeth because of synne. For that were a foolysh vnaduysed counsel, yf one wolde go aboute to escape the wrath of God by transgression, and by synne to auoyde the punyshment of synne.

Besydes thys, doth experience shewe also that they which be so sore afrayed, do cōmunly miscary. Agayne, they that wayte vpon theyr offyces and serue theyr neghbours, be delyuered: As it is well sene in ỳ minysters of the churche and other mo, that shone not the syck, but muste vyset and comforte them

wyth

wyth Gods worde, and prouyde for them wyth the holy sacrament: ffor we se no where, that they therfore must also be soone syck and must dye. Yee how must the hygher powers of the worlde do, which (by reason of theyr callynge, and for the cõmune profyt & regimentes sake) abyde also in the ioperdy, and must mynystre because of loue: Specyally ỳ chefest, on one wherof ther lyeth more, thẽ on a thousãd of other? And yet doth God cõmunly preserue thẽ also ỳ theybe delyuered left styl on lyue, and dye in a good quyet age.

Unbeleefe and mistrust in God is cause of fyenge

Therfore certaynly such inordinate feare and fyenge agaynst Gods commaundemẽt is nothynge els, but a declaryng of a greate and sore vnbelefe, that men do not beleue and trust in God, that he can and wyll delyuer. And thus is verifyed the sayenge: The vngodly haue no peace. Esay.lvii. ffor yf we wyll feare and fye where no parell is, whan wyll we then bestowe oure lyues for oure neghbours, as Christ hath done for vs? & we also be bounde to do lykewyse. i. Jo.iii.

Esay 26 ij

Joh 3

Who so now desyreth to escape ỳ wrath of God & thys horrible plage, let hym not axe his own reason how he shal do, but beleue & follow ỳ worde of God: which teacheth hym, not to fye euell ayre & infecte places (which he maye well do: neuerthelesse he remayneth

yet vncertayne wheter it helpeth or no) but it teacheth hym to leaue of from synne, as from the very originall cause of thys plage and punyshment, and (by true repentaunce and amendemēt of lyuyng) to walke agayne in the ryght waye. ffor ỳ is the onely sure & wholsome flyenge in thys daūgerous tyme, wherby a man may escape thys plage.

But whyther a man ought to flye, therof wyll we heare the holy goost by the prophete in thys psalm. He knoweth it much better then we can thynke, and sayeth after thys maner:

Who so sytteth vnder the defence of the hyghest, and abydeth vnder the shadowe of the almyghtye. He sayeth vnto the LORDE: My hope, and my stronge holde: My God on whom I hope. For he delyuereth me from the snare of the hunter, and from the noysome pestilence.

These wordes (my moste dearely beloued) shall ye take to hart, and marke them well wyth all diligence: ffor they be not the wordes of men whyche can lye and deceaue. Hewbeyt though they were mens wordes, & some olde wyse man spake them (or some well learned physician) ye wolde not yet despyse them, but receaue and kepe them. But now be they the very wordes of the hye ma-

iestye

testye of God, which the holy goost speaketh by the mouth of the prophete. And they teach vs whether we ought to flye for thys plage, that we maye be safe. And certaynly they must nedes be the very truth: For heauen and earth must passe, but my wordes shall not passe, sayeth the LORDE.

But that ye maye vnderstande them ryght and well, ye shall remembre, that it is the vse of the holy scripture (specially in the psalmes) to declare one meanynge with two maner of sayenges, as ye haue oft tymes herde. For so doth the prophete here & sayeth: Who so sytteth vnder the defence of the hyghest, and abydeth vnder the shadow of the almyghtye. For to syt vnder the defence of the hyghest, is euen as much to saye, as to abyde vnder ỳ shadow of ỳ almyghtie. And with these wordes meaneth ỳ holy prophet nothynge els, but: who so putteth hys truste in God with a ryght sure Christẽ beleue, & geueth hymselfe ouer into his protection and defence, (For such people doth God receaue to grace) thẽ holdeth he for his owne deare chyldren, (and euen so they be) and geueth them his holy spirite, whiche worketh in them very saluacion and godly workes. Therfore remayneth he also vpõ them, and all thynges must serue for theyr welth, as

To syt vnder the defence of the hyghest

Paule sayeth Rom. viii. Suche protection also and defence of God, is set forth vnto vs euery where in the scripture, as an ouershadowyng & coueryng with wynges. For lyke as ỹ two Cherubins spred out theyr winges ouer the Arke: Exod. xxxvii. Euen so doth God spreade out the wynges of hys protectiõ ouer hys electe. Therfore sayeth Moses Deuter. xxxii. Lyke as an Aegle steareth vp hys nest, and flyeth ouer hys ponge ones: so spredde he out hys fethers, and bare hys people vpon hys wynges. After this maner spake the holy angell Gabriell also vnto the mooste blessed and pure virgyn Mary, whã she shulde be the mother of God: The holy goost shall come vpon the, and the power of the hyghest shall ouershadowe the Luc. i. In lyke maner spake Christ also vnto Jerusalẽ: how oft wolde I haue gathered thy chyldren together, as an henne gathereth hyr chekens vnder hir winges, & ye wold not? Mat. xxiii. For though a true beleuyng man be in dede the temple of God, & God dwelleth in hym: yet vseth the scripture oft to speak therof, as though he dyd flye aboue vs (in asmuche as he doth ouershadow, couer, & defende vs:) and that because ỹ heauen and the heauen of all heauens (as Salomon sayeth) can not comprehende nor conteyn hym. iii. Reg. iii. But though

though he dwelleth in vs, yet flyeth he wyde, hye and lowe, not only on the outsyde of vs, but also on the outsyde and ouer all creatures. And so in all these wordes ther is nothynge els sayde, but: who so euer is a ryght beleuynge Christen.

Marke nowe then that he sayeth not: Who so is wyse, stronge, ryche, whole, or well frended. Nother sayeth he also: who so kepeth hym selfe thence, or flyeth thether, holdeth hymselfe well, or vseth good phisycke: but who so putteth hys trust in God. Not that the forsayd good thynges be euell, or maye not be had or vsed wyth profyte: But that they (where fayth is not) may euen as soone do harme as good, are in no wyse able to deliuer from the wrath of God. But what doth the beleuer: he sayeth vnto ỳ LORDE my hope. But this do not the vngodly and vnbeleuers, but set theyr hope in the forsayd poyntes, put theyr trust in them, and boast theron, and so commyt spiritual whoredom therwith, and make ydols therof. But to God do not they lyfte vp theyr eyes, nother thynke they vpon hym, nor feare hym. And whan he commeth then with hys wrath, and ouertaketh them wyth a plage, so ỳ of necessite they must nedes thynke vpon hym: than feare they, and be afrayed of hym, flye away,

Nota

They that mislyke Gods creatures, cõmitte spirituall whoredome.

and knowe not where to abyde. Then vanysheth awaye theyr hope and boastynge, whych they (in tyme of prosperite) had vnto the creatures. And so commeth it to passe, ỹ theyr wysedome hath ben playne foolyshnesse: theyr strength, theyr own myssortune: theyr ryches, theyr owne destruccion: theyr health, theyr owne harme: theyr frēdes, theyr owne ypocrytes & traytours. ‡ And all that whyche they trusted vnto, can not helpe thē. Whan they wolde hyde themselues on the backsyde therof, it is euen as much as whan one hydeth hym behynde a ladder. And whan they wolde seke helpe thereby, it is euen lyke as yf a wolfe shuld defēde a shepe or a goose.

Horrible is the death and ende of the vnryghteous. Sapie. iii. ‡ Io. viii, a Psal. i. b Pro. x. a. and. xi. a Eccli. v, b Iacob. i. b

But thus goeth it not wyth the beleuer: for who so putteth hys trust in ỹ LORDE, shal not be cōfounded. Therfore sayeth he not only that ỹ LORDE is his hope, but also hys stronge holde, whyche he maye flye vnto, in the whyche he maye shutte hymselfe close, and be delyuered therin. As Salomon sayeth in the. xviii. chapter of the Prouerbes: The name of the LORDE is a stronge castel, the ryghteous flyeth vnto it, and shal be defēded. For ỹ vnbeleuers haue theyr hope euen in theyr goodes, but in necessyte they fynde not refuge, as ỹ faythful hath a strōge holde and hye castell in God the LORDE.

Pro. xviii. 10

And

And though the vnbeleuers haue theyr whole wyll all theyr lyfe longe, yet hath it an euell ende, as it had wyth the rych man, whych was buryed in the hell. Luce. xvi. ffor who ſo beleueth not, ſhalbe damned. Agayn, though the faythfull be plaged and perſecuted all hys lyfe longe, ſo that he can not ſe how he may be delyuered, yet hath he thys comforte, that ỳ LORDE is hys God: that is, that he can helpe & delyuer hym as an almyghty LORDE, yee after ſuche a faſhion & waye, as nother he hymſelfe, nor ony mans reaſon can thynke or deuyſe. And thoughe he do it not, yet doth not the faythfull diſpayre, but letteth ỳ LORDE be his God, on whom he hopeth: that is, at whoſe hande he loketh for al good in the lyfe for to come and euerlaſtynge. ffor hope ſeyth and loketh on that whych is to come, whych as yet is hyd. As Paule ſayeth Roma. the. viii. Chapter. Hope ỳ is ſene, is no hope for how can a mā hope ỳ which is ſene. But yf we hope that which we ſe not, we loke for it by pacience.

Extrema gaudii luctus occupat. Cap 16

Pro 8.

And ſo is this meanyng: The vnbeleuers haue theyr hope in the creatures, and are afrayed of God. The faythfull hath his hope to God, and is lorde ouer the creatures. The vnbeleuers myſcary, and by the creatures fynde they no helpe in nede. The faythfull is lorde of all creatures.

faythfull

fayth full myscary not, but God is vnto the a stronge holde. The vnbeleuers maye well haue theyr wylles as longe as they lyue, but at the last (thorow theyr dispayre) ther followeth euerlastynge damnacion. The faythfull may theyr lyfe longe haue disquyetnesse and tentacion, but at the last (thorow theyr hope) ther followeth euerlastynge lyfe.

Suche hope shulde they haue, and they haue it in dede, that though they must lye vnder as longe as they lyue, yet after death they shall enherete euerlastynge lyfe.. But certaynly it commeth not to passe, that they must alwaye lye vnder: ffor God is faythfull, and suffreth not his to be temted aboue theyr strength, but maketh the temtacion so to haue an ende, that we may bear it. i. Cor. x. Therfore sayeth the prophete more ouer:

1 Cor. 10.

For he delyuereth me frō the snare of the hūter, and frō the noysome pestilēce. And in these wordes doth he shortly shewe vnto vs, that almyghty God can and wyll delyuer his owne frō all misfortune yet euen in this lyfe. ffor al the myschaunces that we be troubled wythall in thys temporall lyfe, are of two sortes: Some come out of ỹ wycked deuyce of the deuell and of mē, as shame and persecucion. Some playnly of nature and out of the ordinaunce of God, as tem-

Two maner of myschaunces.

pest

pest and pestilence. The faythfull nowe beleueth and maketh hys boast, that these myschaunces can not be so greate and myghtye, but God shall delyuer hym there from.

And it is a goodly naturall similitude, that he lykeneth the euell and wycked deuyce of the vngodly agaynste the faythfull, to a nette or snare of the hunter. For lyke as an hunter prouyeth the kynde and nature of euery wylde beast, cõmeth pryuely after hym, seketh out ẏ course & habitacion therof, and afterwarde setteth the nette, ẏ he may dryue it therin: Euen so do the vngodly also vnto the ryghteous. Fyrst, they loke how they be mynded. Yf ony one be fre of langage, then set they hym on fyre that he may speake somwhat sharpely, as saynt Steuen dyd. Actu. the.vii. Chapter. Yf he be gẽtle and frendly, then ymagen they some foolyshe thynge vpõ hym, and flatter awaye hys harte frõ hym, as Dalila dyd vnto Samson. Yf he seke the saluacion of the people, then sklaunder they hym, as ẏ Jewes blasphemed Christ to be a wyne supper and a companion of publicãs. Yf he be symple, then lye they vpon hym behynde hys backe, or euer he be ware therof: Then followe they vpon hym, crye, lye, and complayne, that the vertuous Christẽ man woteth not what poynte to be at, or how he hath

The lyknesse of the wycked vnto a hunter.

Act. 7.

Judi. xvi.

Math. xi.

Psal. cxxix.

hath deserued it. Neuertheless they thynke the bell is so cast, ỳ at the last it must rynge as they wyll, but it fayleth them.

1. Cor. x. 2. Pet. ii. For the LORDE on whom we beleue, which is our hope, refuge, and God, can not only preserue vs from theyr snares that we fall not therin: but also whan we fall into them, and they thynke we be theyr captiues, he can and wyll delyuer vs yet therout. In lyke maner doth God the LORDE preserue hys faythfull, not onely from the noysome syckenesse of the pestilence, but also whan they be taken therwyth and infecte already, he delyuereth them from it, and maketh thē whole agayne. But how that commeth to passe, and howe we shall vnderstande it, it shall followe here after more clearely.

Why the pestilence is a noysome syckenesse. Thys is nowe well to be marked also, that the pestilence is a noysome syckenesse, not because it bryngeth death: (for that do all other mortal syckenesses lykewyse, and death is no losse vnto the faythfull, but auaūtage, as Paule sayeth, Philip. the fyrst Chapter) but because that it taketh awaye the people very sodenly, vnloked for, and vnwares: Wherout thēther followeth, stryfe, lawyng, or busynesse amonge synners, and of the comune welth, as euery man by hymselfe can lyghtely perceaue and vnderstande. Therfore

fore is it also an horrible punyshment ouer the synne of the worlde, whyche concerneth both them that dye, and them that are lefte alyue, as here after it shall followe.

Pestilence is an horrible punyshment.

Where as is nowe suche a fayth as geueth credence vnto God, he shall preserue hym from all wycked ymaginactions of mē, lykewyse from all noysome syckenesses. And at the last shall he saue hym, that continueth not wythout frute, but breaketh out wyth ryght loue and faythfulnesse towarde hys neghboure, and desyreth also to bryngе hym vnto that poynte, that he maye beleue and be partaker of all suche goodes and benefites of God. Therfore doth the prophete turne hys wordes now also vnto hys neghboure, and sayeth farthermore:

He shall couer the wyth hys fethers, and thyne hope shalbe vnder hys wynges. That is: Yf thou also wylt put thy trust in hym, thou shalte fynde it so lykewyse. For he sheweth such his benefytes vnto all and euery one that put theyr truste in hym. As for the couerynge of hys fethers, and hope vnder hys wynges, youre charite hath herde ynough afore what it is.

Now though all faythfull loke for suche helpe at God, and it happeneth vnto them, yet is it not done without a speciall battayll

offayth. ffor ſuche helpe doth he promyſe vs in hys holy worde, that we ſhulde beleue it. And yf we beleue it, it happeneth vnto vs accordynge to oure fayth. Therfore ſayeth the prophet more ouer: hys truth is ſpeare and ſhylde That is hys godly promyſes, whych are ſure and true, & nother lye nor deceaue: Thoſe be our weapens wherwyth we fyght, and ouercome all aduerſyte. But lyke as ſpeare & ſhylde are not profytable vnto hym that can not vſe them, nor wyll: Euen ſo alſo do not the promyſes of God profyte hym, that can not fyghte therwyth, and wyll not beleue theron. ffor that is the ryght ſcyence in this battayll whan myſſortune, aduerſite or tentacion commeth, that we loke aboute vs accordynge vnto Gods worde: Namely, what comforte and promyſe he hath made vnto vs in ſuche a caſe, & wyth a ryghte beleſe to take holde of the ſame as of a ſhylde, and to comforte and defende oure ſelues therwith, ſo can ther no miſchaūce do vs harme, as the holye Sayut Paule in the laſt chapter of hys Epiſtle to ỳ Epheſians teacheth and ſayeth: Before all thynges take ỳ ſhylde of fayth, wherwyth ye maye quenche all the fyrye dartes of the wycked, &c.

The weapens of fayth

The leſſe of the warre of fayth

Agaynſte the ſame (namelye agaynſte Sathan oure head enemye) is ſuche worde

of

of God, euen ỳ ryghte speare, wherwith we wounde and ouercome hym. For no bodely wapen hurteth and hyndreth men so sore, as the worde of God stoppeth and hyndreth Sathan yf it be thrust vnder hys nose agaynste hys venymous dealynge and temtacion. For yf a seruaũt (that dealeth wrongeously and vnthriftely in hys maysters goodes & busynesses) be afrayed, vexed, and persed thorowe the harte, whan a symple man sayeth vnto him: Thou vnthrift why dooste thou so? that is not thy maysters wyll and meanynge, he dyd not so cõmaunde the. Howe much more goeth it thorowe Satans harte, whan a vertuous Christen man holdeth the worde of God vnder hys eyes, and bryngeth witnesse ouer hym, that he as a wycked creature hãdleth agaynst hys maker, & agaynst hys chosen chyldren? Therfore doth holye sayncte Paule call Gods worde also the swearde of the spirite: And the LORDE Christe defendeth hymselfe onely wyth the same agaynste all temtacions of Satan in the wylderneſſe.

Nothynge harteth the Deuell so sore as the worde of God.

Mat. iiii.

Nowe whan thou takest holde thus of Gods promyses thorow fayth, and vsest the for speare and shylde to defende thy selfe, and to smyte Satan, then out of the same it followeth as the prophete sayeth farther:

That thou nedest not to feare for the

horrybleneſſe of the nyght,

For the arowes that flye in the daye tyme.

For the peſtilence that commeth pryuely in the darke,

For ſyckeneſſe that deſtroyeth in the noone daye.

ffor theſe foure aduerſites ſet forwarde and ſhorten the lyfe of the vnbeleuers: But the faythfull hath ſuch conſolacion and promes, that he nedeth not to be afrayed. ffyrſt for the horrybleneſſe of the nyght. That is, for all maner of tentacion and deceate, that happen vnto men by nyght in the darkneſſe. ffor thys we all perceaue, that in the nyght and in the darkneſſe, we are weaker mynded, of more deſpayre, and more afrayed then in the lyghte. The bloude runneth to oure hartes, & the heeres ſtonde vpryght, and all the body wareth colde for feare. Out of thys cōmeth it the, that we thynke we ſe, heare & perceaue ſomwhat, which in very dede is not ſo. Then goeth ther one aſtray, another leſeth hys coloure, ꝑ thyrde falleth ſycke, ꝑ fourthe is become crocked, the fyfthe goeth out of hys wyt. And ſo men thynke, that the deuell hath done it, where as it is yet a playne natural worckynge of ꝑ exceadynge grete feare, whyche wolde deſtroye a man euen by daye tyme

The horribleneſſe of the nyghte.

tyme, yf it were so greate. Howbeyt true it is that ỳ deuell causeth such feare, and pryn-teth it in, ỳ he maye begile and destroye vs by feare, as by a naturall worckynge: Yet is it nothynge but a feare. ffor the prophete calleth it not an euel or good spyrete, but planely the horrybleneſſe of the nyght. Nother is it ony thynge els also but an horrour & feare. and continueth an horrour and feare.

The deuell is cause of horrybleneſſe.

Therfore where a ryght belefe is, there is no feare. Where no fearfulneſſe is, there is also no horrour, nor fătasye of spyretes, or deceatfulneſſe of the nyght, but playne corage and boldneſſe. Yf ony thynge els be sene (as fyre or lyghte,) they be but naturall thynges, out of the heate of the ground, lyke as lyghtenynges, draggons, fallynge starres and cometes be in the ayre and in the heaue. But here wythall wyll not I speake agaynſt the wonderfull vistons and tokens, whyche god sendeth for a warnyng be for greate myſchaunces to come.

The cause of lygtenynges and such lyke.

Secondarely, is the faythfull sure for the arowes that flye in the daye tyme. That is, all maner of myschaunces which ouertake a man openly in the daye: and yet so sodenly and vnwares, that he can not escape them. As whan a tyle falleth from the roofe of an house, whan a wycked beast doth euell, or

The arowes in the daye tyme

whan an vngracious personne doth hurt in body, name, or good. ffor suche misfortunes come for the moost perte so sodenly, ỳ a man can not preuente them, but must let them hyt as wyth an arowe, and afterward restore & heale the harme wyth greate trauayle and labour. But nowe wyll God preserue hys faythfull from such misfortune, yf they haue hys promyses before theyr eyes, beleue theron, and ordre theyr lyues therafter.

The pestilence.

Thyrdly, a faythfull person nedeth not also to be afrayed for the pestilence, that slypp peth in preuely in the darke. Thys is verely a comfortable promyse in thys daungerous tyme, for the whiche we shulde by ryght put oure trust in God, and thanke him therfore, for asmuch as it is one of the moost perlous and horryble plages, wherwyth he visyteth and punysheth the synne of the worlde. ffor it taketh hold of lyfe vnwares, and plucketh a man awaye in two or thre dayes, (or euer he can ordre hys busynesse and house, & make hys testament) crepeth in preuely in ỳ darke, so that no man knoweth what it is, or whēce it commeth, or whyther it gōeth: therfor can no man kepe hymselfe surely from it.

nota.

ffor yf it were in meate or drynke, it myghte be eschued: Yf it were an euell tayst, it myght be expelled wyth a swete sauoure:

Yf

yf it were an euel wynde, the chãbre myght wyth diligence be made close therfore: yf it were a cloude or myst, it myght be sene, and auoyded. yf it were a rayne, a man myght couer hym selfe for it. But now is it a secret nyght fortune, that crepeth in preuely, so that it can nother be sene nor herde, nother smelled nor taysted tyll it haue done the harme.

Therfore the more daungerous and noysome that the plage is, the better & more excellent is the promyse, that no man shulde haue cause to despayre: ffor how might God make vs a more excellent and fayrer promyse, then that he promyseth to delyuer frõ the pestilence, vs that be hys chyldren, and that we nede not to be afrayed therof, though a thousande dye of the same at oure leftsyde, and ten thousãde at our ryght syde? Yet shall it not reach vnto vs, yf we do but beleue thys promyse, and let it be oure speare and shylde: ffor yf we so do, then shall suche poysoned arowes eyther not hytte vs at all, or els not wounde vs to death.

The more daungerous the pestilence is, the more excellent is the promyse.

ffourthly, God wyll also preserue hys chyldren from the syckneſſe that destroyeth in the noone daye: ffor the noone day (whan the Sonne is at the strongest) is cause of muche heate and feuerous syckneſſe, specyally in those contryes, where the Sonne ry-

The syckneſſe that destroyeth in the noone daye.

seth hye, and commeth nye ouer mens heades. For greate heate bryngeth much sweate, consumeth and altereth the bloude, causeth inordinate drynkynge, and maketh that the people are gladde to coole thē selues agayne foolysshly: Wherout then arise all maner of perlous diseases, whyche be not very vnlyke the syckenesse of the pestilence.

Now whether it be feare of the nyght, or arowe of the daye: whether it be pestilence or syckenesse, that commeth by the euel Southe wynde, or what plage it wyl that lyeth vpon the worlde because of theyr synnes, God the LORDE wyll preserue hys faythfull there from, or delyuer them from it: and that shall come to passe so certaynly and so wonderfully, that (as the Prophete sayeth) thoughe a thousande fal at thy left syde, and ten thousāde at thy ryghte syde, yet shal it not touche the. Thys is doutlesse a louynge, mercifull, cōfortable, and fayre promyse, wheron oure hart by reason shulde truste, and chefely reioyce in the same. For he that speaketh it, is Almyghty and true: therfore shulde we by reason geue credence vnto hym. For we can do God no greater dyshonoure, then to dyspayre in hys holy worde. We oughte therfore to be much more afrayed of the inordinate feare, then of death it selfe: for death can

not

not hurt vs, in asmuch as we (thorowe baptyme) are grafted and buryed vnto like death with Christ. But fearfulnesse (whych is nothynge els but an vnbelefe) maye harme vs, and brynge vs into imprudence. Wherfore my mooste dearely beloued, take these promyses to harte, strengthe youre hart, mynde, and vnderstandynge therewyth, and be not fayntharted. So shal ye proue by experience, that God is true, and faythfully performeth that whyche he promyseth.

Fearfulnesse doth mooste hurte

And that ye maye the more easely beleue it, I wyll declare it vnto youre charite by a symilytude howe it commeth to passe, and whence it spryngeth, that a ryght faythfull Christen man can be so safe and free from all these plages: For it is good to vnderstande, and comfortable to knowe.

Youre charyte seyth and proueth dayly by experience, howe myghtye & horrible thynge the darknesse of the nyght is. For whan it falleth, it couereth all ỹ whole worlde, darkeneth the colaure and fashion of all creatures, captiuateth all men and beastes lyuyng, that they must be styll and rest, yee & maketh them fayntharted and fearfull, and so of all thynges it is a myghty inuincible tyraunt, whom no mã may withstãde. Neuertheles se it is not yet so myghtye, that it can darken,

A similitude of the darcknesse of the nyght.

ouerwheline, and quench the least lyght that is founde in the worlde. For we se, that the darker the nyght is, the clearer do the starres shyne: Yee the leest candle lyght that is lyghted, withstandeth ꝑ whole nyght, & suffreth not onely the darkenesse not to couer or oppresse it, but geueth lyght euē in the mydes of the darkenesse, and smyteth it backe a certayne space on euery syde: and thyther as it is borne, must darkenesse depart, and geue place vnto the lyghte: all the power and fearfulnesse therof, can not helpe agaynst it.

The candle lyghte ouercommeth darkenesse.

And though a lyght be so weake, that it geueth not lyght farre aboute it, nother can smyte the darkenesse abacke (as the sparke of an whotecole) yet can not the darkenesse couer it, much lesse to quenche it: but it geueth lyght it selfe alone, so that it maye be sene a farre of in the darkenesse, and remayneth vnouercome of the same, though it cā not helpe other thynges, nor geue lyght vnto them.

Yee (that yet more wonderfull is) a rotten shynynge pece of woode, whiche neuertheleesse hath the fayntest lyghte that can be founde, remayneth inuincible of all the power of darckenesse: and the more it is compassed aboute wyth darckenesse, the clearer lyght it geueth, so lytle can darckenesse ouercome or hold downe ony lyght: but it ruleth

pan-

banquyſheth, and expelleth the darkeneſſe, whych els ouerwhelmeth, ſnareth, & putteth all thynges in feare.

Euen ſo lykewyſe doth a well ſpryngе alſo, for there maye we ſe, how a lytle vayne of water breaketh out of the grounde, ſomewhere ſcarce ſo great as a fynger. And whan it is cloſed in rounde aboute that the water maye gather together, and muſt nedes be a dych or a pyt, yet ſpryngeth it neuertheleſſe. And though the water be certayne hundreds weyght aboue the ſpryngе, yet maye not it dryue the ſpryngе backe, but the ſpryngе dryueth the whole burthen of the water backe, and aboue it ſelfe, and ſpryngeth ſtyll more and more, tyll the pole flow ouer. And yf the other water be foule and vncleane, it cā not myxte it ſelfe vnder the freſhe clere water of the ſpryngе, but it remayneth clere tyll it come farther abrode from the fyrſte heade therof, as it maye all be ſene wyth eyes, and alſo be proued by daylye experience. A ſimilitude of a ſpryngе of a well

Yf a naturall lyghte then be ſo myghtye agaynſte the darkeneſſe of the nyghte, & an earthen well ſpryngе ſo ſtronge in ſtryuynge agaynſt all ſtandynge waters: howe muche more doth it then the true euerlaſtynge and heauenly lyght, and the onely inuyncible ſpryngе of all lyfe, namely, God

the LORDE oure maker and Sauioure?

God is a true lyghte

That God is ỹ true, euerlastynge and heauenly lyghe, wytnesseth Jhon the euãgelist in the fyrst Chapter, & sayeth: God was the worde, in hym was the lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyghte of men. Lykewyse also in hys Canonicall epistle in ỹ fyrst Chapter: God is lyght, and in hym is no darknesse.

God is a quicke fyrynge.

In lyke maner, That he is the onely inuincyble sprynge of all lyfe, wytnesseth the prophete Jeremy in the seconde chapter ffor there sayeth the LORDE: My people commytteth a dubble synne, they forsake me the lyuynge sprynge of lyfe, and make them selues fayre welles, whyche neuertheless geue no water. And Dauid sayeth in the.xxxv. Psalme: Wyth the is the spryng of lyfe, and in thy lyght se we light.

Yf God the LORDE thē be ỹ true lyght, it followeth, that all they whiche put theyr trust in hym, be as a burnynge candle: for by fayth doth God dwell in our hartes, and we are the lyuynge tēple of God, as Paule to the Corinthians doth wytnesse more thē once. Therfore sayeth Christe of hys disciples. Math.v. Ye are the lyght of the worlde And of Jhon the Baptyste: he was a burnynge and shynynge lyght. Joh.v. Lykewyse yf God be the euerlastynge & lyuynge fountayne

layne, it followeth, that the faythfull be euer flowynge sprynges. Therfore sayeth Christ also, Joh.vii. Who so beleueth on me as the scripture sayeth, out of hys body shall flowe streames of lyuyng water: But this he sayd of the spryte, whiche they that beleue on hym shulde receaue.

Lyke as the darkenesse of the nyght nowe can hurte no earthly or worldly lyght, but must geue place and flye from ỳ lyght: Euen so Sathan also whyche is a prynce of spirytuall darkenesse, can do no harme to a true ryghte beleuyng Christen mã, but must feare and flye from hym: For God, whyche is the euerlastynge lyghte, dwelleth and shyneth in hys harte, and dryueth and expelleth farre from hym all the workes of darkenesse. And lyke as no heape of water can dryue backe ony fountayne of ỳ grounde, and hynder the quycke sprynge therof, and lyke as no vnclennesse can make it foule: euen so also can no aduersyte of this worlde take awaye or shorten ony Christen mans lyfe. For God whyche is the fountayne of all lyfe, dwelleth and lyueth in hys harte, & dryueth all hurtfull poyson and mortall sycknesse farre awaye from thence, so ỳ not only it can not harme hym, but he also helpeth other people, and delyuereth them by hys presence:

euen

euen as a lyght that shyneth farre aboute it, and as a spryng ỳ alwaye floweth, runneth and maketh the grounde moyst an frutefull.

And thys is it that the LORDE sayeth in the Gospell, in the last of Marke: The tokens that shall followe them whyche beleue, are these: In my name shall they cast out deuels, speake wyth new tunges, dryue away serpentes: & yf they drynke ony deadlye thynge, it shall not hurte them: They shall laye handes vpon the sycke, and they shall recouer. So is it red also in the Actes of the Apostles the.v. Chapter, that the sycke were made whole onely of saynt Peters shadow. So vtterly must vanyshe euery thynge that is contrary and agaynste the euerlastynge lyghte, and spryng of lyfe, where a ryght Christen man is, in whom God dwelleth by a true belefe, and out of whome the holy gooste shyneth and floweth.

Let Sathan then preasse in here wyth all hys darknesse and wyth all hys hurtfull infection, yet shall ye se in belefe, that he can not take nor destroye ony Christen mā therwyth yf he continue in fayth, and kepe God in hys harte: But he shalbe smytten backe and dryuen awaye by force, as ỳ wonderfull workes of Christe and of all sayntes do manyfestly declare. Therfor is it a great shame

Satan is dryuen back by fayth

for

for a Christen man to be so afrayed for the plage of the pestilence, as to flye from them whome he is bounde to serue by Gods commaundement. ffor by reason he shulde wyth out al feare make haiste vnto them, not onely to fulfyll Gods commaundemente, but also by hys presence to helpe them, yf theyr fayth do els worke wyth all. But yf it come not to passe, yet is he sure, for as much as God dwelleth in hym, and he walketh and goeth in Gods commaundement. ffor certaynly thys promyse shall not fayle hym:

It is a greate shame for a Christen man to feare the pestilence

Though a thousande fall at thy syde, and ten thousande at thy ryght syde, yet shall it not touch the.

But wyth fayth must these wordes be taken holde vpon, for naturall reason doth not comprehende them, in as muche as in dede it appeareth farre otherwyse. And no man nedeth to thynke nor iudge, that they whyche dye of thys plage, be all vnchristen and faythlesse: but we ought not to doute but that ther dye therof many vertuous mē, and leaue many vngodly.

Thys is done, because that death maye happen to a mā two maner of wayes. One waye, after the commune course of nature, accordynge as euery mans death is appoynted hym of God, and we haue consented vnto

Naturall death happeneth two wayes

to

to it in baptyme. Of thys sayeth the prophet Job in the .xiiii. Chapter. A man hath hys appoynted tyme, the nõbre of hys monethes standeth wyth the: thou hast appoynted him hys boundes, whyche he shall not ouerpasse.

Another waye maye death happen to a man before the tyme, by reason of hys greate & greuous synnes: As ꝑ LORDE hath threatened by Moses, that yf hys cõmaundement be not kept, he wyll cause pestilẽce to reygne. Wherout it is certayne, that whan they be kepte, ꝑ plage abydeth out. Lykewyse sayeth he in the commaundementes: honour father and mother that thou mayest lyue longe, &c. Out of the whyche it is certayne, that hys lyfe whyche doth them not, shalbe shortened. In lyke maner sayeth Dauid in the .lv. Psal. The bloudthyrsty shall not bryng theyr lyfe to the halfe nombre. Wherout it is sure that they shulde lyue muche longer, yf they shed not innocent bloud. Lykewyse sayeth Christ Luce .xii. Yf ye do not repent, ye shall all peryshe, as they that the tower in Siloa fell vpon. Where by it is certayne, that who so repenteth not, maye loke for all myssortune.

Hys lyfe that hearyeth not Gods commaundementes shalbe shortened.

And of thys vntymely death onely speaketh thys Psalme, and promyseth the faythfull Christen men, that they shalbe fre from it. For from the ryght appoynted death into the

the whyche we haue consented in baptyme, we can not shalbe delyuered. Wherfore yf a vertuous ryghte Christen man dye of thys plage, it is certaynly hys very houre appoynted vnto hym of God, whyche he can not preuente. But doutlesse ther dye of it many synners also besyde, whyche myghte well lyue longer yf they repented. And though some be taken because of theyr synnes, yet be they not therfor damned: but yf they are forgeueneesse of synnes and beleue, they shall be saued. As Paule sayeth: When we be iudged, we are chastened of ỳ LORDE, that we shulde not be condemned wyth the worlde.

Thus goeth it then together, that iuste men dye theyr owne ryght death, but ỳ wycked dye an vntymely death, and therwyth doth God punyshe the worlde forest of all because of theyr synnes, but spareth hys owne for theyr faythes sake. Therfore shulde they not be fearful nor fayntharted, but (as ỳ prophete sayeth) they shulde loke & beholde, how the vngodly are recompenced: ffor whether the wycked dye before the tyme, or the iuste in ỳ ryghte season, yet is it done both for the punyshement and plage of the vngodly. Yf vertuous fathers & mothers dye from wycked dysobedient chyldren, then be the chyldren plaged, for they are afterwarde euell nur-

God punysheth men by the death of other.

murtoured, hanged or slayn. Yf yonge chyldren dye from wycked fathers and mothers, then be the chyldren delyuered, & the fathers and mothers punyshed, in that they haue gathered theyr goodes for those that they wyshe them not vnto. Yf tyrãntes dye, then be they punyshed, and the persecuted Christen delyuered. Yf good rulers dye, which wyth theyr wysdome haue maynteyned peace and good gouernaunce, then be they in peace: And so the vngodly whyche are left alyue, rayse vp warre and sedicion, and be alwaye punyshed worse and worse. Shortly who so hath eyes of fayth, seyth ỹ true beleuers dye in a ryght season, but ỹ vngodly before the tyme. Wherfore whether good mẽ dye or lyue, it is done for theyr welthe. But whether the wycked dye or lyue, it is done for theyr punyshment, and by all wayes shall they be plaged, and theyr wyckednesse shall be rewarded them.

Good mẽ dye or lyue for theyr welth, but ỹ wycked for theyr punyshment.

Wherfore my moost derely beloued, take ye such doctrine & comforte to harte, and follow ỹ same. Flye in good earnest (by true repentaunce & amendement) from synne, wherwyth the world hath deserued thys horryble plage: And flye by a true vpryght fayth vnto Gods word, wherin is the fountayne of lyfe and ỹ lyght of men: Then shall ye be whole and safe from thys and other plages,

and

so lyue to the honoure of God and welth of your neghbour, tyll the appoynted tyme come, wherin God the father (in the death of Thryst that we be baptised in) shal sende for vs out of thys myserable lyfe to hys owne euerlastynge kyngdome: Which God graūt vnto vs all. Amen.

How they ought to be comforted that are in bodyly sycknesse or trouble.

Dearly beloued brother I truste ye beleue that all thynges, whether it be sycknesse, angupshe, or what missortune so euer it be, it commeth all from almyghtye God. For yf he be your faythfull father, thā doth he it to your furtheraunce that he taketh holde on your olde Adam, and leadeth hym presoner wyth thys bonde of your sycknesse, and helpeth you to tame and to mortyfy hym, that so ye maye yelde youre selfe the better vnto your LORDE God, and hange on the crosse wyth Thryste. For thys cause is suche sycknesse of yours a fatherly chastenynge: For whome God loueth, hym dothhe chasten. And of hys fatherly mercy

Rom. viii. All thynges serue for the beste vnto thē that loue God.

Heb. xii.

taketh he thus holde vpon you wyth very truthe and loue. Happely he seyth that your olde Adam wyll be to wanton and rash for you, and waxeth to stronge & fearce for you. And for thys cause putteth the LORDE a bydle into hys mouth, whereby he be not hurtfull vnto your noble soule and myscary ber. Flesh and bloude is stronger in you thã the spzete, therfore helpeth he your spzete to fyghte. Perchaunce yf ye were whole, it myghte entyce you to synne agaynste God, whereby hys holy name myghte be blasphemed, and so were youre soule the moze cursed for ỹ fylthynesse of manyfolde synnes. But nowe doth he auoyde all that from you thorow fatherly mercy, and turneth awaye youre flesh and bloude that alwaye rageth agaynste the spzete, and leadeth it captiue, so that it hath nomoze rowme nor occasion to couet all maner of synnes.

Rom. vii.

Seynge than that hys fatherly wyll is suche, and that suche thynges do happen vnto you to good, therfore do I earnestly admonysh you that by no meanes ye do wythstande hys fatherly wyll, but pzaye hartely, that hys wyll be done and fulfylled in you vnto hys pzayse. And humbly beseke to graunte you his mercy, tha tye may beare thys crosse of hys pacientlỹ: For pacience bzyngeth ex-

Rom. v.

perience,

perience, experience bryngeth hope, but hope letteth vs not come to confuſion. Thus haue ye nowe occaſion to be pacience, and wyllyngly to ſuffre al maner of thynge that God ſendeth vnto you, for ſo muche as ye perceaue in your harte, that he meaneth the thynge in very dede, and thys commeth by tryenge. ffor wythout ye aſſaye it wyth the dede how good it is ſo to retayne the LORDE. (as Dauid ſayeth: It is good to my that I haue ben in trouble, ỳ I maye learne thy ryghteouſneſſes) ye can not hope and truſte in hym: In ſo muche as ye haue not aſſayed that ſuch fatherly loue is hyd vnder thys rodde. Pſal. cxviii.

But whan ye haue perceaued ſuche a thynge, than are ye bolde in all ſufferynge, and take hope vnto you, the lõger the more ſeynge God doth ſo truely aſſiſte you. And though he do let you ſyncke a lytle whyle & ſtyck faſte, yet doth he drawe you forth agayne, though it be longe. He ſuffreth you a lytle to ſwymme and to douke, but not to drowne. Wherby ye maye perceaue that he wyll neuer forſake you, whyche hath ſo ofte and many tymes ayded you. Yf he doth bryng you ſometyme in greate anguyſhe, ſo that ye myght thynke it all to be done wyth you, yet forſake hym not, but let your truſt Dan. xiii.

and hope remayne faste and sure in hym: for ye haue heretofore learned well ynough the propertye and nature howe he goeth aboute wyth hys: ye knowe also that it is not done of anger or hate, but of pure and entier loue. Abyde therfore for the LORDE in all your sufferynge, and truste wholy and inceassaūtly in his mercy and helpe, how longe so euer he wythdraweth hymselfe and taryeth: And be fully persuaded that thys your sycknesse, (or suche other grefe) is not vnto death, but

Joh. ix. xi

for the honoure of God, and your profyte & saluacion. For who so darre truste so in God, and beleue his promyses stedfastly, the same shall neuer dye, as Christe hymselfe sayeth: Yee and byndeth it also wyth an oth

Joh. viii

that it be so in dede, sayenge: Uerely verely I saye vnto you: Yf ony man kepe my word, he shall neuer se death. And in another place

Joh. xi

sayeth Christe: I am the resurrection and the lyfe. He that beleueth on me, shall lyue, though he were deade already: and who so euer lyueth & beleueth on me, shall neuer dye.

Kepe and holde sure thys comforte, and be bolde there vpon. For who so beleueth in Christe, shall not tayste of death, but is already passed from death to lyfe. Euen as he wytnesseth of hymselfe, where he sayeth:

Joh. v

Who so beleueth on me, hath euerlastynge

lyfe

lyfe. But thys is the lyfe euerlastynge: that they knowe the, that thou only arte the true God, & whom thou hast sente Jesus Christ. The lyfe euerlastyng begynneth here in this lyfe, & endureth euer. ffor who so hath Christ, the same truely hath very lyfe: for he hym selfe is the lyfe. Joh. xiv. He is also the truth. What so euer he promyseth you, that shalbe yee, and not naye. He wyl abyde faste by his promyse, euen as he sayeth hymselfe: I wyll not take away my kyndnesse from hym, nor suffre my truth to fayle. I wyl not breake my conuenaunte, nor disanulle the thynge that is gone out of my lyppes. Joh. xvii. Psal. lxxxviii.

Howe wyfe

chyldren and other frendes shalbe comforted, the husbonde beynge dead.

Seynge nowe that God hath called your husbonde, father or other good frende out of thys mysery into euerlastynge ioye, therfore shall ye receaue it wyllyngly: for it is hys worke. Repyne not therfore at hys worke, nother wepe agaynst his wyl, cõmitte & cause vnto him, take it of his hande as a fa therly prouynge, & saye with Job: God hath

geuen vs hym, & hath taken hym agayn, the name of LORDE be blessed: as it was the LORDES wyll, so is it happened.

God almyghty wyll proue you as he dyd Job how ye wyll behaue youre selfe as he taketh out of youre syght the thynge ỳ ye loue. He wyll admytte well ynough ỳ ye be sorye. For it is seldome sene but a man (be he neuer so vyle, or of so lytle reputacion) hath euer a sondery gyfte wherewith he serued & profyted other. And ỳ same gyftes were not greatly regarded in a man whyle he lyued: for cõmunely we regarde lytle suche thynges as are present: but as soone as ỳ man is gone, so soone as ỳ vessel is spilte, thã begynne we to want the gyftes ỳ were cõteyned therin. Therfore is it no maruayle that we be sory for suche a gyfte of God, yf it be takẽ out of our syghte.

There is no membre of the body but it hath hys proper gyfte.

As longe as we vse men & the gyftes accordyng as they be ordeyned of God for our necessite, than do we well, and that can God suffre well ynough: But that we misvse thẽ, and make an ydoll of them, ỳ can not God suffre. For whan we put oure trust & cõforte in man, or ony other creature, than do we wrõge, & misvse ỳ same, and the curse cõmeth vpõ vs wherof it is wrytte Jerem. xvii. Cursed is the mã that putteth hys trust in man.

God is displeased wyth mysvsage of hys gyftes

For all mans helpe is to be suffred only

whan

whā they be preſente, and that we haue nede of them: but as ſoone as they are gone, than muſt we loke for other helpe, namely: God, lettynge go it that paſſeth awaye, thynkyng it to be tēporal, faydynge at the twynklynge of an eye, and vanyte that is in thys worlde. We haue here no abydynge thyng, but muſt loke aboute for the thynge to come that endureth for euer.

ffor thys cauſe doth God draw & pull vs ſo from the creatures. And ſeynge he is oure true father, bridegrome & huſbōde, he can not (for he is ſtrōge & gelous) abyde þ we ſet oure hope, loue, or truſt vpon ony creatur. Thys is the cauſe then that he doth take vs from thē, and carryeth vs vpon hym ſelfe. ffor loke on what creature we haue mooſte hope, loue, and affection, that wyll he ſooneſt take out of ſyght, yf he doth loue vs. And whan he hath ſuche gelouſy vpon vs, than doth he mooſte chefely declare hys loue towarde vs.

God can not abyde that we make much of creatures

By thys alſo it commeth that Chriſte Mathe. xviii. forbyddeth vs to call ony man father vpon earth, for we haue onely one father in heauen, namely God, which wyl nor can ſuffre vs to call or to haue ony mā vpon earth father: & that becauſe we ſhulde depend and hange only vpō hym, lokyng for al good of hym. ffor he wyll be þ ſame that we maye

We ought to call no man father vpō earth.

harde-

hardely truste vnto: seynge he can not, nor wyll fayle vs, & that because he is no earthly but an heauenly father. ffor thys cause than is that man blessed and happy, that putteth hys trust, hope, and confidence in the LORDE, as the prophete sayeth. Psal. xxxiii.

ffynally yf whan nature fulfylleth hyr course, man hath but cõtinual trauayl & mysery, & after that thys course of nature is ended & at rest, mã is eased of so great trauayl: we seme to hate rather thã to loue them that be departed yf we wold wish thẽ to be in this wretched worlde agayne. Moreouer in makyng so muche of oure frendes departed, and settyng so greate affection vpon them, wyshynge Gods worke not to be fulfylled vpon them, we blame God in hys wyll and workynge: as though he knew not better what were best both for them and vs, than we. Job. xlii

Let vs therfore set oure wyll in Gods wyll, and suffer hym to worke at hys pleasur. ffor he knoweth best what is both oure frendes and ouresoules health.

FINIS.

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